

Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to Labour

50p

inside

ELECTION LAUNCH SPECIAL

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Solidarity price £1

Sick of Blair, hate Hague and want to build a better world?

Your chance to kick back

OVER 160 SOCIALIST CANDIDATES ALREADY

CAROLYN LECKIE is a health worker in Glasgow. **Berlyne Hamilton** is a black worker at Ford's Dagenham car plant. **Ateeq Siddique** is a community activist in Bradford.

These are just three of the over 160 socialist candidates challenging the main parties at the election.

The Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party will be giving a voice to all those who were overjoyed to see the end of the Tories four years ago but are sickened by the betrayals of New Labour since.

The socialist candidates are not slick suited politicians or people on the make. They are people like you, ordinary working class people who want a good NHS, proper education for our children and decent pensions for the old.



All have pledged to take only an average worker's wage if elected, and donate the rest of their MP's salary to supporting the struggle of working class people.

All are fighting on a manifesto that puts the needs of working people before those of the rich and big business.

They say we should tax the rich to fund public services. They say renationalise the railways and stop privatisation of schools and hospitals.

They fight for black and white to unite against racism, and oppose the scapegoating of asylum seekers. They demand that

big business is made to stop wrecking the environment.

They deserve your support. Join the socialist election campaign, and kick back at the betrayals of New Labour.



SOCIALIST CANDIDATES are backing fights like the one by Dudley health workers against privatisation

NEW LABOUR HAS BETRAYED US

Ten reasons to break from Blair

1 HE STILL WON'T TAX THE RICH

THE RICH have nothing to fear from a Labour election victory. That was Tony Blair's main message as he launched his election campaign.

He pledged not to raise the top rate of income tax, the same promise to the rich that he made in the run-up to the 1997 election.

Inequality between rich and poor has already grown to record levels under four years of New Labour.

Blair's tax pledge to the rich now means the gap will get even bigger after his election.

Blair also claims his government is committed to boosting public services like health and education.

But the record of the last four years is miserable.

Even Blair was forced to tell the cabinet this week that New Labour has "not done everything people want".

Incredibly, New Labour is actually spending a lower proportion of national wealth on health and education than the Tories did.

Understaffed

That's why not a week goes by without a crisis or a scandal hitting the NHS.

And that's why teachers and parents know that schools are understaffed and do not have the resources to give our children the education they deserve.

Blair's tax promise to the rich means none of that will change under a new New Labour government.

2 Growing gap

BRITAIN UNDER New Labour is more unequal than at any time for over a century.

The government's own Office for National Statistics reported last month that the gap between rich and poor has grown under Blair.

The New Labour supporting *Guardian* explained, "The income gap between rich and poor is continuing to widen under Labour and last year outstripped even the highest inequality mark under the Conservatives."

●The poor pay proportionately more tax than the rich. That's the shocking fact after four years of New Labour.

Someone in the poorest fifth of households typically pays 41.4 percent of

their overall income in tax. Someone in the top fifth of households pays just 36.5 percent.

The figures were revealed last month by the government's own Family Expenditure survey.

●The number of millionaires in Britain has more than doubled in the last five years.

There are now 73,990 millionaires, up from 33,063 in 1995. For the poor it's a different picture.

A quarter of people in Britain now live in poverty, a report by a series of universities found last month.

The study found that back in 1983 14 percent of people had low income and were unable to afford basic household necessities. That has now leapt to 26 percent.

3 Lethal cost of privatisation

THE COSTS of privatisation were underlined this week by the official report into the Hatfield rail disaster.

It found that both Railtrack and contractor Balfour Beatty knew of cracks and other problems with the track, but nothing was done.

The result was October's crash in which four people died when the track shattered.

Railtrack first found a problem with the Hatfield track back in 1998, according to the report.

The *Financial Times* adds that "tests carried out by Balfour Beatty [on the Hatfield track] gave results that should have indicated a serious problem, but they appear not to have been acted on".

Yet New Labour's only answer to the crisis on the rail is to throw ever more public money at Railtrack.

It has just agreed to hand another £1.5 billion subsidy to the company.

And, incredibly, deputy prime minister John Prescott has made Balfour Beatty one of his "preferred bidders" to take over London's tube.

6 Oil giants rob us

OIL COMPANY Shell made a record £2.7 billion profit in the first three months of this year, it announced last week.

That is over £1 million an hour, every hour of every day.

It is the latest in a series of similar super-profits announcements by the giant oil companies.

Just a 15 percent levy on these bonanza profits could raise £17 billion, enough to renovate 100 existing hospitals and build 30 new ones. That would mean no need for PFI schemes.

Block

And simply putting the tax on North Sea oil extraction back to its 1979 level could pay for the future running costs of all these hospitals.

But Blair allows the oil giants to continue polluting the planet and block any real action on climate change.

He even put Lord Simon, the former boss of oil giant BP, in his government as a minister.

4 Made to serve

UPSTAIRS, downstairs is back under New Labour. The number of domestic servants in Britain doubled during the 1990s.

5 Public services bleeding dry

TONY BLAIR secretly scrapped an official report at the end of March that showed the awful state of Britain's public services under New Labour.

The report said that Britain's schools, hospitals and other core services lacked "sufficient sustained investment", suffered from staff shortages, low pay, poor leadership and let down their users.

This was too much for Blair and his inner circle. They stopped the report being published.

In key areas Labour has spent less in each of its four years in government than the Tories did in their

final 12 months in office.

During the last year investment in transport, schools and hospitals came to just £4.3 billion. Even the Tories spent £4.7 billion in the run-up to the 1997 election.

Spending

During the past four years spending on new capital investment in public services has averaged less than 0.5 percent of gross domestic product. Even under the Tories in the 1980s it was over 1 percent.

Is it any wonder our public services have not got better?

9 Reward for the wealthy

BIG BUSINESS has never had it so good as under New Labour.

Chancellor Gordon Brown has slashed the corporation tax on company profits to the lowest in the industrialised world.

It is now just 30 percent, and for some businesses as low as 10 percent.

Back in 1983, after four years of Margaret Thatcher's Tory government, corporation tax was 52 percent. Just putting it back to that level could raise £22 billion a year that could transform health and education for the better.

10 NHS in crisis

AROUND A third of nurses in Britain are planning to resign over the next year because their workload has left them "emotionally exhausted".

There is a record nursing shortage of 22,000 vacancies.

Health workers report they are overworked and underpaid.

New Labour has spent an average of 5.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on health over the last four years.

Even the Tory government in its last year spent 5.5 percent of GDP on health.

7 Old in poverty

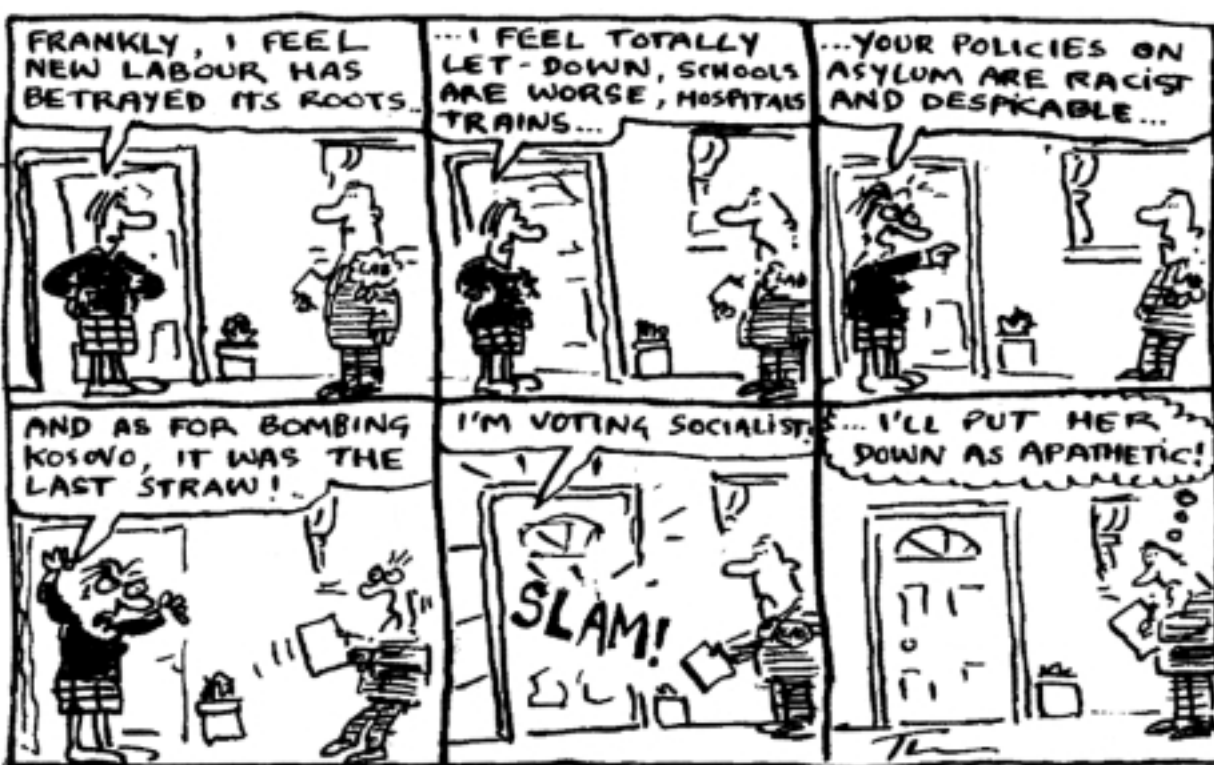
OVER 55,000 pensioners died from cold in Britain last winter—the highest figure since 1976.

8 Profits pile up

BLAIR REFUSES to even tax the rich as much as Margaret Thatcher.

She had a top rate of tax of 60 percent for the rich for much of her time in office.

Blair won't increase the rate at all from its current 40 percent.



QUOTE THAT SHOWS HOW FAR IT'S GONE

LAST FRIDAY evening I met, for the first time in 20 years, a man who—when I knew each other well—was the distinguished headmaster of a north of England comprehensive school.

"No sooner had we shaken hands than he told me that he had voted Labour in very general election since the Second world War.

"I have learned from recent hard experience that, these days, protestations of previous loyalty almost all lead to announcements of imminent desertion.

"So he did not have to say that, thanks to Alastair Campbell's reference to 'bog-standard comprehensives', he could never vote Labour again.

"I felt a sudden urge to ask the heretical question. Am I still what I would once

call 'a Labour man' because of sentiment, the comfort that comes from imagined familiarity, or because the Tories are so much worse?"

This isn't a left winger speaking, but Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour Party in the 1980s, who helped Neil Kinnock launch the "modernisation" process which led to the triumph of Tony Blair.

Now even he is questioning the policies of New Labour and comes across numerous once-loyal Labour voters who will never vote Labour again. Unfortunately Hattersley still advises people to remain within and vote for the Labour Party.

But disillusioned Labour voters can be won to voting for the Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party in the election.

what we think



GETTING THE socialist message across means organising protests, leafleting, stalls and much more over the next four weeks

Action stations

Socialist pledges

- Stop privatisation—renationalise the railways
- Tax the rich and big business to rebuild the welfare state
- For the right to work—35-hour week now
- Defend asylum seekers
- End discrimination. Against racism, sexism and homophobia
- A fully funded NHS, and an end to privatisation and cuts
- Raise pensions and restore the link with earnings
- Stop the sell-off of council homes—for an end to homelessness
- Fully funded comprehensive education—no selection
- Repeal anti trade union laws—strengthen rights at work
- Raise the minimum wage to £7.40 an hour—the European Union Decency Threshold
- Save the planet—we want tough action on pollution and food safety
- Stop the onslaught on civil rights
- Cancel Third World debt

THIS ELECTION will see the biggest left wing challenge to the mainstream parties since the Second World War.

The Socialist Alliance in England and Wales, and the Scottish Socialist Party will be contesting a quarter of the seats at the general election.

They are already drawing support from lifelong Labour voters who cannot stomach the betrayals by this government.

The next four weeks are critical. The scale of the socialist election

campaign and the vote it achieves on 7 June could boost working class people across Britain.

Blair has taken the hopes of four years ago and ground them into cynicism. He admits that the turnout may fall as core Labour supporters cannot bring themselves to vote for New Labour.

William Hague would like to build out of that despair. The Tories are spiteful, racist and for more big business policies. But they remain hated and have got nowhere.

Clear majorities of people back left wing policies over renationalisation of the railways, taxing the rich, raising the basic pension, and so on.

None of the mainstream parties support those policies.

Left to them, the next four weeks will be bitter and brutish, as politicians fall over themselves to scapegoat the vulnerable and defend the millionaires.

Turning away from the election will not change that. Being part of a vibrant socialist campaign can.

Everyone can help build the campaign

THE SOCIALIST election campaign starts today. There isn't a moment to lose.

Socialist Worker is appealing to all its readers to get involved.

Leaflets have to be distributed through every door in the constituencies. Stalls and stunts have been organised for shopping centres across Britain.

Posters have to be put up

encouraging people to vote socialist and get involved.

Campaign activities are happening every day.

Everybody has something to offer. If you do not live in a constituency that has a socialist candidate, you can join the campaign in a nearby one that does.

Workmates

In your community, workplace, college or club you can collect money for the campaign.

New Labour and the Tories will rely on advertising paid for by big business donations.

Socialists will rely on hundreds of people in each area telling their friends, family and workmates why they should vote for a left wing

alternative.

They want to get the socialist message across in workplaces, schools, housing estates and elderly care homes.

Why not invite your local candidate to speak to people you know?

Most candidates' details and how to get involved in your area are listed on page 12.

We also want to make sure *Socialist Worker* gets out to everyone to arm them with all the election arguments.

The bigger the socialist vote on 7 June, the more people will see that we can fight against New Labour's big business policies.

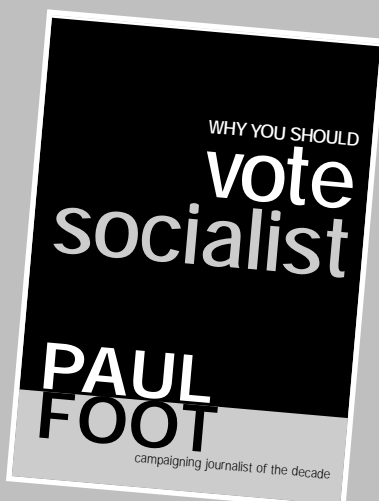
That is worth fighting for. But energy and determination have to be put in over the next four weeks to make it happen.

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‘As usual Paul Foot is bang on the money, which is the most important place to be. Essential reading for anyone with doubts about the New Labour project.’

● MARK THOMAS, broadcaster and comedian

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SPARKS
FLY

Sefton ballot

SEFTON COUNCIL in Merseyside is planning to close down seven social service centres, including four homes, a respite centre, a school for children with disabilities and a family centre.

Around 1,200 UNISON union members working in the council are due to begin balloting for strike action against these cuts. Seventy service users and family members attended a public meeting against the closures last week.

Action on low pay

THERE IS a big mood for strike action by medical secretaries, and administrative and clerical staff working in the NHS in Scotland.

These workers are among the lowest paid staff in the NHS.

●Full story page 15

All out for union

MEMBERS OF the TGWU union at the Dynamex Friction Dynamics (formerly Ferodo) plant in north west Wales have launched an all-out strike.

The workers are fighting against the effective derecognition of their union by factory boss Craig Smith.

●Full story page 15

Tenants' victory

FOLLOWING A hard fought campaign by tenants and the Socialist Alliance, a proposed ballot for transfer of council houses into private hands has been dropped by the New Labour controlled Exeter City Council.

The council spent £250,000 preparing the way for the ballot.

However, during the pre-ballot consultation 75 percent of tenants did not support the privatisation of their council homes.

This victory means that Exeter is the only council where such a proposal has failed to reach the ballot stage.

New Labour council leader Roy Slack admitted, "The depth of the feeling shown during the consultation has made it very clear what the outcome of the ballot would be, and I think we should call a halt now."

This victory should encourage people up and down the country.

●Pete Harrison

Backed by MPs

SOME 50 MPs have now pledged their backing to the Manifesto for Council Housing.

Tenants' strong opposition to New Labour plans for stock transfer of council homes to housing associations and private landlords, has led a growing number of MPs to back the campaign.

London Underground

We can still stop the tube privatisation

FEELINGS OF bewilderment and fury swept tube workers last week. Their strike was called off just hours before it was to begin.

The RMT union suspended the 24-hour strike on Wednesday after a disgraceful attack by TUC leader John Monks.

Tube bosses had been forced to make significant concessions over safety and job security.

And Blair was forced to allow Ken Livingstone's transport supremo, Bob Kiley, to negotiate with firms bidding to run the tube. But this is still based on the assumption that tube privatisation will go ahead under New Labour's PPP scheme.

RMT union reps made exactly that point at an angry 160-strong meeting on Tuesday of this week.

Some 24 out of 25 speakers slammed the decision to suspend last week's strike. "I came out over privatisation. That's still the issue," said one.

There was applause for calls to strike for two days during the week of the

general election.

Tube workers know they will face pressure from union leaders not to do that.

John Monks wrote to union leaders to "formally request" that they called



off the strike last week.

The Tory London *Evening Standard* revelled in printing Monks's call on its front page.

He echoed London Underground management's threats that concessions made to the RMT could be withdrawn if the union struck.

RMT leaders were wrong to bow to the pressure and suspend the action. "Many of us expect it from Monks and even from Jimmy Knapp, the general secretary of the RMT," said one RMT member on the Victoria Line.

"But Bob Crow, our as-

sistant general secretary, has played a good role up to now.

"He encouraged us not to cross picket lines when ASLEF union members were striking officially and our action had been declared illegal in the High Court.

"There is no way he should have gone along with calling off the strike."

PPP means breaking the tube up and giving three consortia control over maintaining different groups of lines and stations. It means private companies directly making a profit out of the tube.

The preferred bidders to take over the tube lines were announced last week.

Killing

They include Balfour Beatty, the company responsible for maintaining the track which shattered at Hatfield last October.

Bechtel is also leading a consortium.

It tried to break union organisation among electricians on the Jubilee Line Extension.

Agreements with London Underground management will mean little if these sharks get their hands on the tube.

RMT leaders were considering what to do next as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

Tuesday's reps meeting showed that only organised rank and file pressure can ensure action is taken to sink privatisation.



JOHN MONKS, TUC leader, speaking against tube privatisation with rail union leaders—before he attacked the strike

Greenford walkout

Militancy in the post

ALL 700 post office workers at the Greenford office in west London walked out unofficially last week when union rep Steve Botwright was suspended for refusing to take on extra work beyond his normal duties.

One of the main reasons bosses set up the new

office in Greenford was to break union militancy and stop unofficial strikes. Management want to move some work done at the well organised NDO office in north London to Greenford.

The plan is to dilute militancy and break good working agreements won

in the past.

Now Greenford workers have shown they too are not going to be pushed around and are ready to fight for their rights.

CWU union members told *Socialist Worker* that Steve is a very good rep and were convinced this was the reason for the suspension.

Workers also expressed deep anger with broken promises by management over terms and conditions. Bonuses have not been paid for six months and overtime is being cut back.

Shown

The strike lasted for 36 hours and was sustained by big picket lines. There was also solidarity action at the Edgware and Harrow offices.

National union officials eventually persuaded workers to go back after arguing that the dispute hung on a question of interpretation of the Way Forward agreement pushed through last year.

The national officials' actions infuriated some workers who said they were acting just like management.

Greenford workers have shown they are ready to fight. That needs to be built on.

●A new turn in the post—see page 14

Dudley Group of Hospitals

Nine months on, strikers facing new challenge

THE DUDLEY health strikers heard that the contract to transfer their jobs out of the NHS was signed over the bank holiday weekend.

The private consortium Summit Healthcare has been trying to take over the domestic workers' jobs for nine months.

It was forced to announce delay after delay because of the 600 strikers' determined action.

But it has always known New Labour backed the privatisation all the way.

The consortium now says sections of workers will start to be transferred from 21 May.

The Dudley strikers, mem-

bers of UNISON, have never wavered in their battle to fight NHS privatisation.

Over 100 strikers held a lively mass picket of Russells Hall Hospital on Friday of last week.

But UNISON leaders have not matched the strikers' commitment to the fight.

They refused to mobilise the union's one million members in a key battle that took on New Labour's pro-market policies.

Mark New, joint UNISON branch secretary for Dudley Group of Hospitals, said members of the strike committee who met on Tuesday were clear who was to blame for the contract being signed.

"People on the strike committee pointed the finger at the government and the NHS trust," he said.

"But strikers were also angry at UNISON nationally for not putting their full support behind the dispute."

Alliance

The strike committee was due to put a recommendation to the strikers' mass meeting on Wednesday.

It included continuing the strike until 20 May to clarify exactly what the details of the contract are.

The strikers are intending to go ahead with a planned local demonstration on 2 June.

"We feel we have

developed the fight against the Private Finance Initiative both locally and nationally," says Mark.

The Dudley strikers will continue that fight by supporting striker Angela Thompson as their local Socialist Alliance candidate.

Angela said, "Is it any wonder we're seeking an alternative to New Labour?"

"A number of us are standing on a Socialist Alliance platform across the city and it's important to get the word out about what we're standing for—get privatisation out of our public services."

■For more details of the planned activities phone Mark New on 07970 792 266.

Birmingham Erdington Socialist Alliance

Campaign off with a bang



The writing is on the wall!

SHOPPERS on Erdington High Street in Birmingham last Saturday got their chance to throw a wet sponge at Tony Blair.

A Socialist Alliance supporter wore a Tony Blair mask and was elted with sponges as art of the campaign for candidate Steve Godward, a local firefighter.

That is just one of the deas Erdington Socialist lliance has come up with o raise Steve's profile ocaly. Its campaign has eally taken off.

Steve's brother Simon as donated the side of his ouse. It is now covered by huge mural showing teve, in his job as a irefighter, washing away ony Blair and William ague.

"I said, why not put omething on the house all, although I didn't ealise it would be quite so pectacular!" says Simon.

"People are knocking t my door asking me hat the Socialist lliance is all about."

"I think we need a hange, to be given omething better. We need etter health and schools, nd asylum seekers need elp. I think the Socialist lliance is it."

Candidate Steve odward says, "We've got verybody involved—eople who left politics ears ago and vowed hey'd never come back, xisting groups and many thers.

"There is a spirit of olidarity. We've got a anner, stunts, a campaign ong. It's really nvigorating. Every week ew people come along."

Local teacher Jan amilton says, "For a year t least I've been thinking, ho do you vote for? ertainly not the Labour arty.

"I've known Steve for round 16 years, and when

I heard he was standing as a candidate, a working person, I said, 'I'll support him.' When I go along to the constituency meetings they are getting bigger."

"The Labour Party are the same as the Tories and there is a political vacuum," says Arash Shakib, another member of Erdington Socialist Alliance.

"I voted Labour in 1997, though not with great expectations. But I never thought they would carry on with what the Tories have done."

"I think it's very important the Socialist Alliance has come about."

Carol Naughton, national vice-chair of CND, says she is attracted to the Socialist Alliance by "sheer frustration with Labour. Look at Star Wars. It is not about defence—it's about aggression.

"The Socialist Alliance is an alternative, bringing together all people on the left who had hopes and dreams of socialism.

"I first joined the Labour Party 25 years ago when I was young and daft. I left 15 years ago.

"My 20 year old son lived under Thatcher. He had hopes that life would be different under Labour.

"What difference? There is the tube sell off. They won't renationalise the railway or anything. They were supposed to be committed to abolishing nuclear weapons but we've seen no more of it."

Clive Kesterton, a former chair of Erdington's Labour Party ward, is also supporting the Socialist Alliance.

"I joined Labour around 15 years ago and left over Clause Four. I haven't voted Labour for three years," he says.

"Steve is an alternative. I'll vote for him and go along to the constituency meetings to offer what support I can."

John McHugh was one of the shoppers attracted to



A GIANT mural on the side of a house in Erdington has put the Socialist Alliance on the map. It shows candidate Steve Godward, a firefighter, washing away Blair and Hague

last Saturday's Socialist Alliance stall:

"I used to be a member of the Labour Party years ago but I let it lapse.

"I'm very pleased that when I go to the polling

booth this firefighter's name will be on the ballot paper. He does an extremely important job and he is taking up the cause of the ordinary person.

"I will distribute leaflets, and on election day give me a call. I will help carry banners or help get people out to vote."

And 19 year old Natalie Maguire also stopped at the stall, saying, "Tony Blair hasn't got a clue. He's not done anything for people.

"Wages are really low and the minimum wage is ridiculous. I'll definitely vote Socialist Alliance."

Why I'm a candidate

● **STEVE GODWARD**, vice-chair of West Midlands FBU firefighters' union, and Socialist Alliance candidate for Birmingham Erdington

“I JOINED the Labour Party in 1996 to get rid of the Tories.

In 1997 I grafted for the Labour Party—I was up and down ladders putting up posters, handing out leaflets.

I believed there would be redistribution of wealth, although I knew it wouldn't be overnight.

But then Blair invited Thatcher into Downing Street and Labour cut corporation tax.

Now the Private Finance Initiative is coming into the West Midlands fire service. They want to close Aldridge and Bloxwich fire stations, and replace them with a PFI one.

The Labour lot didn't even have the bottle to stick their hands up to vote for it—they just grunted it through.

The defining moment came when I was getting something for my wife from the shop.

A group of asylum seekers were at the till buying basics using vouchers.

I just couldn't stay any longer in a party propagating such racism.

New Labour is constantly in slavish obedience to big business. Someone's got to tear that script up.

I have seen the film about the protests in Seattle and I went to the Globalise Resistance conference in Birmingham.

You can feel something good is in the air. This isn't a protest vote.

The Socialist Alliance is a new force in town—it's about the future.”

Pictures: JESS HURD

Defection in Basildon

A LABOUR candidate for the local elections in Basildon, Essex, has joined the Socialist Alliance.

Charlotte Armstrong is a lone parent and student who was selected to stand as Labour candidate in the council elections, due in many parts of Britain on the same day as the general election.

In her Pitsea West ward there is a campaign against a proposed new incinerator. Hundreds of people packed

into a public meeting about the issue last week.

But the Labour group on Essex County Council is backing the incinerator project.

"I had a crisis of confidence because I could no longer defend New Labour's attacks on students, lone parents, the elderly and the disabled," says Charlotte.

"These are the people that have always voted Labour, but now who do they turn to for a political voice?"

"We have a Labour MP who voted for cuts in lone parent benefit and student funding, and she was on the committee that approved the 75p rise for pensioners which was an insult.

"That's why I am supporting the Socialist Alliance. I am not leaving Labour because of the ordinary members of the party, but because those members have been betrayed by their elected representatives in parliament."

Socialist Review PUTTING THE PROTEST INTO POLITICS

Analysis of the Socialist Alliance challenge to New Labour PLUS ■ FAR RIGHT IN EUROPE ■ BRAZIL ■ PAUL ROBESON £1.50 from your Socialist Worker seller, or to order your copy send a £2 cheque/PO (payable to Socialist Review) to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH. Phone 020 7538 3308 for credit card orders



inside the system

THINGS THEY SAY

"THE Economist speaks for Trotskyite minorities."

■Spokesman for GIANFRANCO FINI, the far right politician allied to Italian prime ministerial candidate Silvio Berlusconi who the magazine had attacked

"THE most articulate—by a long way—were the Socialist Workers Party members shouting slogans to the effect that the World Bank causes poverty and death."

■Scotland on Sunday columnist JOHN LLOYD on the anti-capitalist May Day protests in London

"MAY DAY has been presented as a triumph for the police, which is a good thing, since if they hadn't triumphed after spending that much money, using tactics that heavy-handed, they really would have been as stupid as conversation with them suggested them to be."

■Evening Standard columnist ZOE WILLIAMS, who went on the London May Day protests

"CONTAINS NUTS."

■Warning on a packet of SAINSBURY'S jumbo salted peanuts

"THE PARTY is a legitimate business expense."

■Disney spokesman JOHN DREYER on spending \$5 million on a party for the premiere of the new film *Pearl Harbor*

"TO SAY they have to lay 4,000 people off because of the economy while still splashing out \$5 million on a premiere is obscene."

■WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA spokesperson

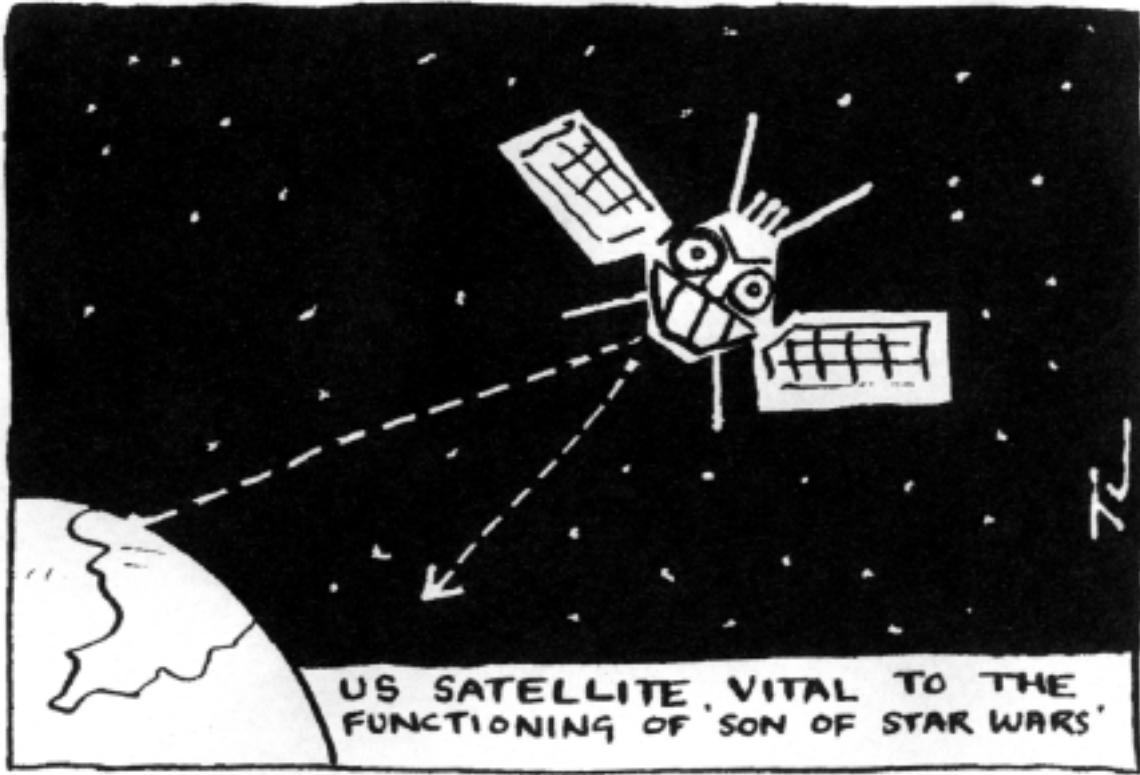
"IT IS a small, thin house surrounded by houses on either side."

■FRIEND of Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, who have been living in a luxury three storey section of Kensington Palace paying a rent of £70 a week. The government will pay the £1.1 million required for the palace's upkeep this year

"FOR £70 a week around here you would be lucky to get a lock-up garage."

■Letting agent ANNA CUTHBERTSON

DO YOU have a story for Inside the System? Send it to Inside the System, Socialist Worker, PO Box 82 London E3 3LH



Police lose plot

POLICE paranoia over May Day reached new depths as the coach from Ilchester pulled into London last Tuesday morning.

Police piled onto the bus and hauled marketing consultant Sean Dromgoole off for lengthy questioning centring on Sean's alleged anarchist involvement. He had no such involvement.

While on the bus Sean had had a conversation on his mobile phone with a friend who was opening a new restaurant in central London, the Mangiare.

The friend was worried about the May Day protests near the restaurant.

Following his marketing instincts, Sean suggested a publicity wheeze.

Why not get staff in Mangiare T-shirts to stand outside the restaurant handing out pizza to passing demonstrators?

An undercover cop travelling on the bus overheard the phone conversation and called Scotland Yard.

Pizza? Mangiare T-shirts? Must be some sinister Italian anarchist plot to bring chaos to the streets of the capital, and all cleverly orchestrated from the morning Ilchester to London coach.

'Sack 'em all'

YOU KNOW where you stand with the magazine *Business Finance*.

Its upfront masthead declares that its aim is "Driving Down Costs And Boosting Your Profits".

Just in case there was any doubt, a feature article headlined "Time For Change" begins, "Sod it, we'll sack 'em all."

□NEXT TIME you see figures for rises in average earnings, remember this.

Figures just released show that the huge bonuses paid out to City traders by just 25 firms "were almost entirely to blame for the jump in headline average earnings to 5 percent from 4.5 percent" last month.

The Telegraph's May Day blues

THE DAILY Telegraph had a full page feature last Friday on the London May Day protest.

It was not quite what you might have expected in the true blue Tory paper.

It was written by Susan Irvine, a fashion and beauty writer for the *Sunday Telegraph* magazine.

She joined the May Day protest because of her concern over issues like Third World debt.

She told over one million *Telegraph* readers:

"I had been forcibly detained by the police, along with 3,000 other mainly peaceful protesters, in Oxford Circus without anything to drink or eat, or anywhere to have a pee for seven and a half hours.

"From where I was standing, in the epicentre, the May Day demonstrations involved peaceable, articulate people who had come together to protest.

"They were not aggressive, antagonistic anarchists smashing windows.

"It was strange afterwards to see clips

of flare-ups on television. It wasn't like that on the ground. Instead we endured long hours of boredom followed by long hours of physical and mental distress.

"Every now and then the crowd would get so frustrated at having their freedom to leave denied that there would be a chant of, 'This is what democracy looks like.'

"We had already been endlessly videoed by police cameras, but the police were searching and photographing people as they left."

'Peaceable'

Later one of her friends got claustrophobic: "Our friend sat on the kerb shaking with distress. I approached a senior policeman and asked if he could slip away. 'No,' said the officer. 'That'll teach you to come to things like this.'

"It's taught me a lot, but not that. I came away feeling angered and alienated by what I experienced as heavy handed policing of a peaceable crowd. And, if anything, I feel even more fiercely about the issues."

March of capitalism

MISSING the point? Anyone phoning the national train enquiries line last Monday or on the morning of Tuesday, May Day, heard a strange recorded message:

"If you are inquiring about tomorrow's capitalist march in London, please phone..."

★ WHEN May Blake got a letter on her birthday recently she got a nasty shock. It was a form for Job-seeker's Allowance. May was ordered to fill it in and told that she should be out getting a job. May lives at a nursing home in Harrow. It was her 106th birthday.

I'm alright, Jack

MOTOROLA IS axing its Bathgate mobile phone plant and throwing thousands of workers on the dole.

The firm's communications director, Derek Milne, said, "We are all in this together," and pledged to help workers find new jobs.

Milne has certainly helped at least one Motorola worker to get a new job—himself.

Workers are furious that Milne has slipped away to a new highly paid job and taken a five-figure redundancy deal from Motorola.

★ DO OUR trade union leaders have no principles left?

The Corus steel multinational, which is axing thousands of

jobs held its annual general meeting in London last week.

The venue? Congress House, owned by the Trades Union Congress.

Weasel v pig

A POLL among young people has cast some interesting light on how the main party leaders are viewed.

The "Generation Next" poll of 15 to 21 year olds asked which animals Tory leader William Hague and prime minister Tony Blair reminded them of.

Hague was called a red squirrel ("soon to be extinct"), a weasel ("opportunistic and without principle") and a snail ("going nowhere fast").

Blair meanwhile was labelled a tick ("living off the opinions of others") and a pig ("eating pound notes from a swill bucket").

Mobilising meeting

100,000 on the way to Genoa

ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS are predicting that the demonstration outside the G8 summit of world leaders in Genoa in July will be at least 100,000 strong.

The G8 meeting, which takes place on 20-22 July, brings together leaders of all the main industrialised countries. They will discuss Third World debt and try to smooth the way for more trade liberalisation.

The protests are demanding the cancellation of the debt and that people's priorities should come before profit.

Activists across Europe are organising for Genoa. There is a good chance to win significant working class support for the demonstrations.

The Genoa Social Forum (GSF) met last week. It is an umbrella group of over 170 organisations which is co-ordinating the protests.

About 250 people gathered in a dockers' union social centre in Genoa. They were mostly from Italy, but included some 60 delegates from other countries.

There were representatives from several Italian trade union groups, including the main electricians' union, which is backing the protests.

Also present were environmental campaigners and Genoa mobilising groups from Germany and Greece. Anti-debt campaigners were represented from across the globe.

From the beginning of the meeting it was clear that the protests in July will be massive and that, while people will protest for many different reasons, there is a strong feeling for unity in action.

Activists from across Europe told of an excitement in their countries for going to Genoa. Delegate after delegate said their contingents would be much bigger than those that went to Prague last September.

Globalise Resistance in Ireland expects to send over 200 people from Dublin. Thousands are expected from Greece and Germany. The French ATTAC group expects to bring at least 10,000, and there was great support for the train from Britain.

The possibility of a right wing coalition led by Berlusconi winning in Sunday's Italian election meant that many Italians were concerned the protests would be met with bans and repression.

But others argued that the

'There will be direct action protests on 20 July. The march on Saturday 21 July will be huge'

protests were a real chance for the left in Italy to send a powerful message to whoever forms the government.

There are four main events to counter the summit in Genoa.

The first is a week long Social Forum with speakers from across the world, where activists and campaigners will gather to discuss the ideas and politics behind our movement.

On Thursday 19 July a mass protest for immigrant rights will march along the "exclusion zone" imposed by the Italian authorities around the conference hall.

Much of Genoa's immigrant community lives within this area.

There will be direct action protests on 20 July. Because these will occur on a weekday, a number of speakers raised the possibility of winning strike action.

This idea went down well because the idea of unity between workers and direct actionists was a key theme of the conference.

The march on Saturday 21 July will be huge. The initial route of the march was to be away from the G8. But it quickly became clear that everyone wanted to get as close as possible to allow people to show their anger.

Vanya, an activist from Slovenia, said the protests should disrupt the G8's peace in the town and "inform the local people that they themselves are paying for a meeting that has huge material, human and moral costs for civilisation".

●Martin Empson

GLOBALISE RESISTANCE NATIONAL CONFERENCE SUNDAY 13 MAY

Globalise Resistance, the British-based activists' organisation which has been prominent in recent protests, will hold its first conference this weekend. There will be speakers from the French ATTAC group and Trident Ploughshares. The conference will discuss the lessons of the May Day protests, organise to get as many people as possible to Genoa for the G8 protest, and debate other campaigning issues.



University of London Union, 12-6.30pm
Phone 020 8980 3005 or 07956 681 328
Email office@resist.org.uk

GENOA

Globalise Resistance is laying on a train to get people from Dover to Genoa.

Tickets are available for £120. Hurry now to book. Contact details above.

Tory and New Labour scapegoating

Racism fuels the debate on asylum

TONY BLAIR led up to his announcement of the election with a major article in the *Times* against asylum seekers.

He didn't use the opportunity to offer solutions to poverty and under-funded public services.

Instead he said New Labour will try to change the 1951 United Nations convention on refugees. This is the basis for laws allowing people fleeing torture and repression to come to Britain.

Blair's attitude to Tory attacks on refugees was merely that they were going about it in the wrong way.

"Our criticism of the Conservative opposition over asylum has not been about racism, but about opportunism," he wrote.

He then boasted that "asylum rules have been significantly strengthened in the last three years", trumpeting the government's repressive measures.

New Labour agrees with the Tories that being against asylum does not make you a racist.

But anti-asylum rhetoric leads to racist conclusions. That link has been shown in a report in last Monday's *Guardian* by two researchers studying the British social attitudes survey.

The people who were the most hostile to immigrants held strongly racist views.

"Outsiders", or people who are in some way perceived to be different, get the blame for problems in society.

The argument then spreads—if the latest group to come to Britain are really "bogus" and scroungers", then so are earlier groups.

So black and Asian people, as well as refugees, can suffer abuse and attacks.

The Tories' open racism disgusts the vast majority of people. But Labour is also pandering to racist ideas.

● A few days after foreign secretary Robin Cook's speech attacking the Tories for their "myths of an Anglo-Saxon race", home secretary Jack Straw said he would remove 30,000 asylum seekers from Britain, double last year's total.

● Last week Home Office minister Barbara Roche granted special powers to immigration officers allowing them to target particular nationalities.

Afghans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Somalis, Kurds, Roma Gypsies, Albanians and some Chinese are now liable for "special treatment" involving especially rigorous questioning.

New Labour is attacking vulnerable asylum seekers while cuddling up to the rich. The Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party want to tax the rich and welcome asylum seekers.

Picture: S O'NEILL

We back refugees

HERE ARE two examples of where ordinary people have taken up the cause of asylum seekers.

□ A LETTER signed by GPMU print union members on the night shift at KRN, publisher of the Folkestone Herald, said:

"The widely publicised racist advertisement placed by Tory MP Michael Howard in the Folkestone Herald was a clear attempt to play the race card in the election.

"The Tories in east Kent are desperate to cling on to those seats in the area they managed to save in 1997, and will descend to any depths to do so.

"It is a shame, therefore, that Tony Blair in an exclusive article for the paper a few weeks ago spent most of his time describing New Labour's attack on asylum seekers, rather than refuting the myth of the 'bogus' refugee.

"We work for the company that publishes the *Folkestone Herald*—a paper which became notorious for racist reporting under a previous editor and proprietor.

"We had hoped that things had changed.

"Yours, six GPMU members, KRN chapel (part of Trinity Mirror)."

□ **MESSAGES OF support, get well cards and solidarity collections have flooded in following the horrendous attacks on two Palestinian refugees in the Sighthill area of Glasgow at the end of last month.**

Members of the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees got a fantastic response to their petition condemning the attack.

We linked them to both the Tories' attempts to play the "race card" and New Labour's racist asylum policies.

The petition was taken up by the Scottish Socialist Party in the Springburn constituency which includes Sighthill.

Socialists argue that refugees are not to blame for the poverty in areas like Sighthill.

We will fight for decent resources for everyone living in working class communities.

● **Mark Brown**

**No to
BNP
mail**

POSTAL WORKERS in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, have voted not to deliver election addresses from the Nazi BNP.

Local union reps raised the matter with management and demanded that people who wanted to opt out should be allowed to do so.

Bosses said it was "impractical" to have such a policy, and said they would allow a survey to be held to test what the real opinion was in the office. The survey then showed a clear majority who did not want to have anything to do with such leaflets.

The union is now waiting for management's response.

Around 80 percent of 151 workers in Huddersfield delivery office are white.

There is an excellent record of anti-racism, and many workers there refused to deliver Nazi mail during the 1999 Euro elections.

Every postal worker should try to follow the example at Huddersfield. Royal Mail has to be made to understand that workers do not want to assist in any way with the spread of Nazi filth.

OVER 100 people marched through Cambridge in March demanding that the detention centre for refugees is shut down

OLDHAM

Police target anti-Nazis

THE POLICE ensured that the Nazi National Front (NF) was able to defy home secretary Jack Straw's ban on its march in Oldham last Saturday.

Greater Manchester police deployed 500 police on the streets of Oldham, supposedly to stop the Nazis marching.

Yet the police allowed around 40 members of the Nazi terror gang Combat 18 to march in the town centre. Later the police allowed around 70 Nazis to rally, claiming they didn't have enough officers to prevent this.

The Nazis are intent on increasing the racial tension in the area. The Nazi British National Party is also standing in two seats in the coming general election.

But the police used their powers to pen in around 200 black and white anti-Nazis.

Mobilise

Chief superintendent Eric Hewitt attacked the anti-Nazi protest, saying, "More than 500 people came into Oldham to cause trouble from all parts of the country."

Cath from Oldham, who joined the anti-Nazi protest, said, "It's absolutely ridiculous. The Nazis are the ones that need controlling and got off our streets. I don't want the NF in our area."

Hundreds of Asian youths had gathered at the entrances to their estates to protect their communities



Pic: CATHERINE RATCLIFFE

ANTI-NAZIS in Oldham were stopped by police

from the Nazis.

"We're demonstrating that we're not scared of the NF," said Abdul. "We don't want them round here. People aren't going to stand for it."

Twice during the day these Asian youths marched down from their estates to try to confront the Nazis.

On both occasions the police and their community leaders managed to convince them to return to their estates.

This was the second weekend in a row that the police have allowed racists to mobilise and target Asian communities in the area.

Last weekend showed once again that the police are more interested in constraining anti-Nazis than stopping groups like the NF and BNP spreading their race hate.

□ **ABOUT 50 people attended the launch meeting of the Socialist Alliance in Oldham last week.**

Many people were angry at the

stirring up of racism by the media, police and politicians.

It was agreed to stand a Socialist Alliance candidate in the general election in Oldham West and Royton, the same seat that BNP leader Nick Griffin is contending.

Why I'm voting socialist



'I AM so disillusioned with Labour. I'm supporting the Socialist Alliance because I want to be part of a united front of everyone on the left. I want to be part of an organisation that incorporates everyone working together for a socialist future.'

■ **ROISIN MacDOWELL, student at Manchester University**



critics of capitalism

Anarchist founder

MIKHAIL Bakunin was born into a well to do Russian family in 1814. But he broke with his background to take part in many of the workers' struggles against capitalism in the 19th century.

LAST WEEK we looked at some of the earliest critics of capitalism, the utopian socialists Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen. This week our occasional series continues by looking at the ideas of Mikhail Bakunin, one of the best known founders of anarchism.

worker's wage.

The Commune broke the old capitalist state machine and began replacing many of its functions with new forms of organisation.

For Marx, it became the model of how workers could form their own political power, a workers' state, and use it to crush the capitalists.

They could then move towards a society where class divisions were abolished and production was for need, not profit.

Marx's main criticism of the Commune was that it did not centralise its power and use it to the full. That allowed the French state to eventually crush the Commune, drowning it in blood.

Bakunin, however, took a different view. He argued that the problem facing the mass of people was not really capitalism, but authority—any exercise of power over other people.

Reject

At first glance there does not seem to be much of a difference. All socialists reject the "authority" of the boss, the police, the head teacher and so on.

But Bakunin, and anarchists, said any form of authority breeds exploitation and oppression. Denouncing all "authoritarianism" could sound superficially radical.

But fighting the capitalists requires organised power—the picket line in a strike, majority decisions at mass meetings, occupations, militant mass demonstrations which unite against the enemy, and so on.

Bakunin, like every serious anarchist, in practice recognised this. He travelled to the French city of Lyons the year before the Paris Commune to put himself at the head of

a short lived uprising.

He announced that the state was "abolished" and with it all "authoritarianism".

He then called for capital punishment for anyone who "interfered in any way whatsoever" with the new society he and his 20 supporters had declared! The death penalty is, of course, a highly authoritarian act.

Marx saw how workers could establish a collective democratic power.

He called for socialists to be organised openly inside the working class.

Orders

A revolutionary party had to fight over every political question and seek to win over the mass of workers.

Bakunin's alternative was hopelessly contradictory, less than revolutionary and highly authoritarian.

He rejected democracy as the authoritarian rule of the majority over the minority. So his own political organisation was undemocratic.

He thought that 100 members of his secret International Brotherhood, with half a dozen people issuing orders, could act as "invisible pilots" directing mass struggles.

He attacked Marx for teaching the workers theories" Bakunin believed people should just rely on instinct instead.

He thought revolutionaries would gain influence by voicing "the instincts of the people" rather than by open argument in mass democratic organisations.

So he spent his life rushing from one place to another trying to artificially spark uprisings. He died in 1876, bitter at the mass of people for not listening to him.

Bakunin is a symbol of revolutionary opposition to capitalism. But his ideas do not offer a way to overthrow it.

by KEVIN OVENDEN

Tommy Sheridan MSP interviewed

Scotland's socialist challenge to Labour

THE SCOTTISH Socialist Party (SSP) will be a powerful force in the general election.

Socialist Worker spoke to Tommy Sheridan, the SSP's member of the Scottish Parliament, about the potential for the left.

On the day of the interview it had been announced that the SSP and the Socialist Workers Party in Scotland were uniting.

Scottish Socialist Party

WHAT'S YOUR message as the election campaign begins?

IT IS time for a real challenge to Labour after four years of them letting down working class people.

Labour have realised that in the run-up to the election they had to talk more left, to give more prominence to empty rhetoric about ending child poverty, for example.

But the figures reveal the truth—New Labour have spent less on improvements to public services than the Major government, a Tory government, did.

They say they intend to spend more, but that does not cut any ice.

The people who get the new tax credits can lose up to 85 percent of the money through reductions in housing benefit and council tax benefit because the credit is regarded as income.

Why don't we have an 85 percent tax rate for the richest, not the poorest?

All you get from Labour is the spin, from people who have no notion of what it is like to live in the real world on a low income or benefits.

I did a debate recently with Polly Toynbee.

Her new book is full of the corrosive cynicism that there is no alternative, that we can complain all we want but there is no other way—except for Hague and Widdicombe waiting in the wings.

Of course that's a frightening prospect for working class people. We say there is another way, a socialist alternative.

If the disillusion with Labour is not mobilised by the left, there is a danger it can be mobilised by the right.

We have to strongly defend the provision of asylum. New Labour will not do it.

There's a briefing document for Labour candidates which says if they are challenged about prisons for asylum seekers then the response should be that it is too expensive. Too expensive!

Politically they are no longer prepared to stand up for the right of people to flee violence and torture and desperate poverty.

Instead they argue on the basis of cost. It shows how far they have gone.

WHAT DOES the SSP stand for?

WE OFFER a clear class programme in opposition to New Labour's record of

betrayal, against the businessmen at the centre of government and Labour's readiness to serve the interests of a wealthy minority.

We call for public ownership of oil, transport, construction, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and finance, the return of privatised assets, a minimum wage of £7 an hour and a maximum wage, a shorter working week, restoring the link between pensions and earnings.

To deliver that would require revolution, no doubt about it. But we can't have a secret revolution. We need the support of the majority in society.

WHAT ARE the prospects for the left in the coming election?

OUR TARGET is 100,000 votes.

If that is supplemented by recruitment—and it must be, because votes are no good without recruitment—then we will have established ourselves as Scotland's fifth party.

In many of the urban areas we will be the third party, supplanting both the Tories and the Liberal Democrats.

It will be the sowing of the seeds, a two-year campaign involving industrial campaigns, direct action and civil disobedience leading up to the Holyrood Scottish Parliament elections of 2003 when I firmly believe there is a real

whereas the nationalist ideology is divisive.

It sees the world through nationalist spectacles that have never been appropriate because Scottish bosses and industry are just as ruthless as English, French or German bosses.

We look through class spectacles. We try to unite the working class in Scotland as part of an international movement for socialism.

There is a great feeling for unity among the left inside the working class movement

WHAT DO you think is happening internationally?

A DECADE ago, after the downfall of the Stalinist bloc countries, the certainties in politics became uncertainties.

The whole notion of socialism was under attack by the ruling class.

They declared the New World Order had been established and that socialism was finished. That was a weak moment internationally.

But it sparked a process of re-examining ideas and looking at new forms of organisation.

In Europe you can see there were realignments of the left on radical programmes.

Over the last four or five years the whole world situation in terms of questioning both the moral and economic right of the free market to dominate has increased apace.

It has accelerated over the last three or four years to the extent that being anti-market is quite popular. We need to improve the equation so that being pro-socialist is popular too.

The anti-globalisation forces are refreshing, but what's missing is the idea of what will replace the present set-up.

There is definitely a thirst for genuine democracy but that requires public ownership and accountability.

It's not enough to just feed off the world movement—we have to be part of shaping it as well.

First and foremost we stand on the side of the youth, environmental campaigners and anti-nuclear protesters.

But we also have to explain we are involved in a project that encapsulates them as well, which is built around a socialist alternative.



THE UNITED SSP contingent made an impact on last weekend's May Day march in Glasgow

HOW DO you respond to the SWP-SSP merger?

IT IS very exciting that the SWP has joined the SSP. It is part of a wider process going on at the moment, in opposition to New Labour and the destruction brought by global capitalism.

There is a great feeling for unity among the left inside the working class movement.

It is not a moment too soon for all of us to respond positively to that mood.

The response from the class as a whole, the more they find out about it, will be, "Thank Christ, at last the left has got their act together."

Tony Benn often says there are far too many socialist parties and not enough socialists, and it does ring true in many of the battles that we face.

We are so divided, whereas the right wing and the establishment are so united.

In official politics there is an increasing hegemony around the promotion of the free market. We cannot afford the luxury of being so divided on the left.

The 80-20 principle is a good one to

adopt—there is 80 percent that unites and 20 percent that divides us. Surely that's enough for unity and common action?

A social attitudes survey recently showed that since 1999 Scottish society has moved to the left and that nearly half of the electorate is to the left of Labour—well up on 1997.

In no small way I believe this is due to the SSP raising left politics and socialist ideas.

Now in the SSP at least 90 percent, maybe 95 percent, of the active left will be in one party, promoting one paper, promoting one programme.

At last weekend's May Day demonstrations in Glasgow and Edinburgh there were SSP contingents with one banner, one set of placards, selling one paper.

WHAT POLITICAL lessons are there from the Record's disgusting campaign against the SSP over drugs and other issues?

I HAD a column in the Record for the best part of a year and a half, which we used constantly to raise the SSP's

banner and socialist ideas.

For example, we called for the scrapping of Section 28 when the Record was running a vile campaign to keep it.

The Record let it continue because it was popular.

But we heard that Gordon Brown was furious that the Record was not being slavish enough towards Labour. He apparently demanded that there be a new editor and one duly arrived,

A social attitudes survey recently showed that since 1999 Scottish society has moved to the left

Peter Cox. His background was in the Murdoch press.

Two days after he took control I got a letter saying the column was finished.

For the Record, I went from being the "Radical Voice of Scotland" to "Pillock

Number One", "a low life lurking under a stone".

It would be naive to think that the Record's attacks did not have an effect, especially on a layer of older people.

For younger people I think going against the stream has made us more attractive.

I have done public meetings recently in Fort William, Bellshill, Clydebank, Dumbarton and Coatbridge, and one of the best things about them was the number of young people there compared to previous meetings.

That might just be the growth of the anti-globalisation movement and so on, but an element is that we have touched a nerve by raising the drugs issue.

Some people have said I shouldn't have raised this issue before the election, that it will lose votes. But it would be electoralism if you start to dilute your politics and policies because an election is coming.

I always emphasise that the number one issue on drugs is starting the war on poverty because that is where problem drug use thrives.

Behind Star Wars

Policing the 'have nots'

NIGEL CHAMBERLAIN is the national press officer of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. KARL GROSSMAN is professor of journalism at the State University of New York and has written widely on the US government's Son of Star Wars project.

Socialist Worker spoke to both about why globalisation is leading to a renewed threat of war rather than the peaceful economic expansion defenders of capitalism predicted.

"A VERY good cartoon sums up what is happening," says Nigel Chamberlain.

"It shows a starving black child and a rich businessman in the first frame. Then a US soldier appears and says, 'I'm here to protect you.' The child looks up hopefully.

"In the final frame the soldier pushes the child away and smiles at the businessman.

"George Bush's National Missile Defence, or Son of Star Wars, scheme is part of this interlocking of economic and military power."

Karl Grossman has pored over the official US documents relating to the new arms race announced by Bush.

He says, "The focus on US interests in the world economy is explicit.

"One document reads, 'Globalisation of the world economy will continue with a widening gap between the haves and have nots.'

"It goes on to say that the US will have to police the have nots. They mean keeping in line the sweatshop workers turning out Nike shoes and also any country that appears to upset the global economic order.

"Another document says that the US should take as a model the way the European colonial powers built up their militaries a century ago."

But, Karl points out, "that arms race ended in the First World War."

Of course, there are differences between the way the world looked a century ago and today.

Links

But the core features remain. War, militarism and the gulf between rich and poor are as built into capitalism today as they were 100 years ago.

Multinational corporations today are bigger and have their tentacles spread further across the globe.

They still, however, depend on links with powerful states. The biggest depend on the most powerful state of all, the US.

The links are most obvious when you look at the arms companies. Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing and TRW all stand to make a fortune from Son of Star Wars and are lobbying hard for it," says Nigel Chamberlain.

"They are intimately connected to the US military and government."

"It is also clear with

"It is part of a drive to enforce US interests in every sphere"

"That was a microcosm of what is happening now."

"It is not just about protecting particular industries."

Spending

"There is a long term drive to enforce US interests in every sphere.

"US president Ronald Reagan began the Star Wars project in 1983.

"It did not go away when Russia was bankrupted through trying to keep up with US arms spending.

"Clinton spent an average of \$7 billion a year on it and authorised \$30 billion last December.

"So called Missile Defence through interceptor missiles is only part of it. All the official papers refer to extending military power to space.

"They want to strike anywhere on the earth's surface without suffering casualties.

"Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire says US military domination of space is 'our new manifest destiny'.

"He is deliberately using the language of US leaders who justified the colonial domination of Latin America and the Philippines a century ago."

PROTESTING against Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

NO TO Star Wars

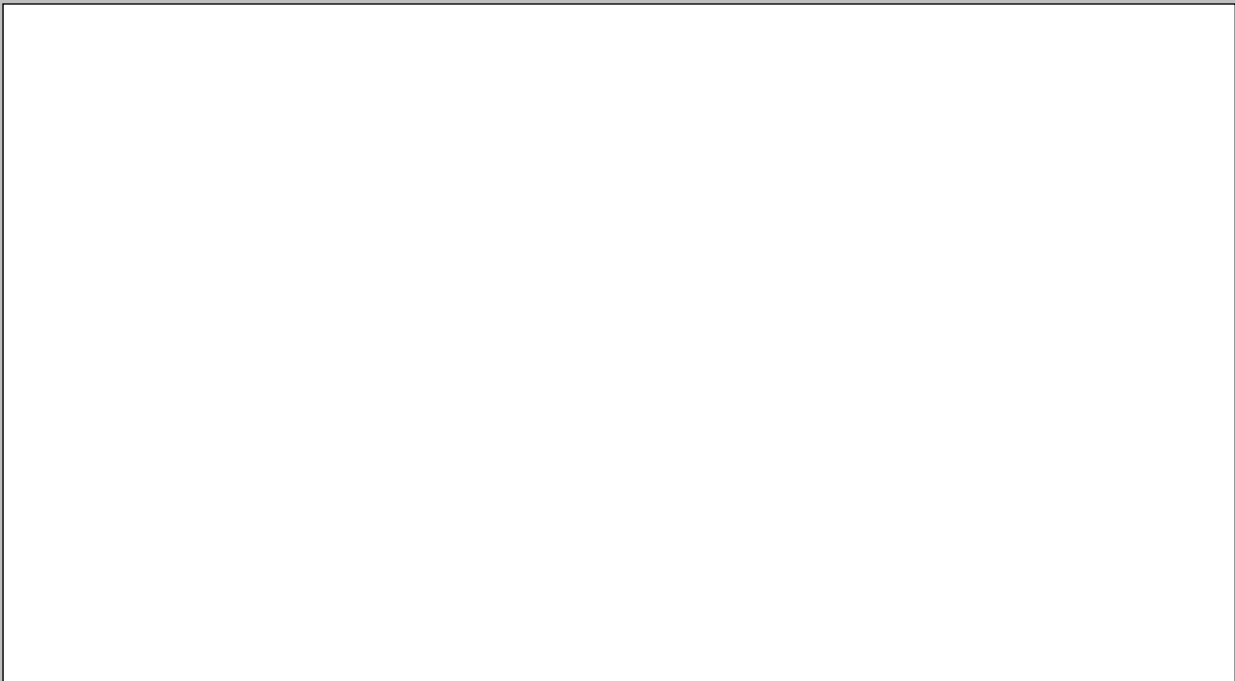
NO TO Star Wars

MARXISM 2001

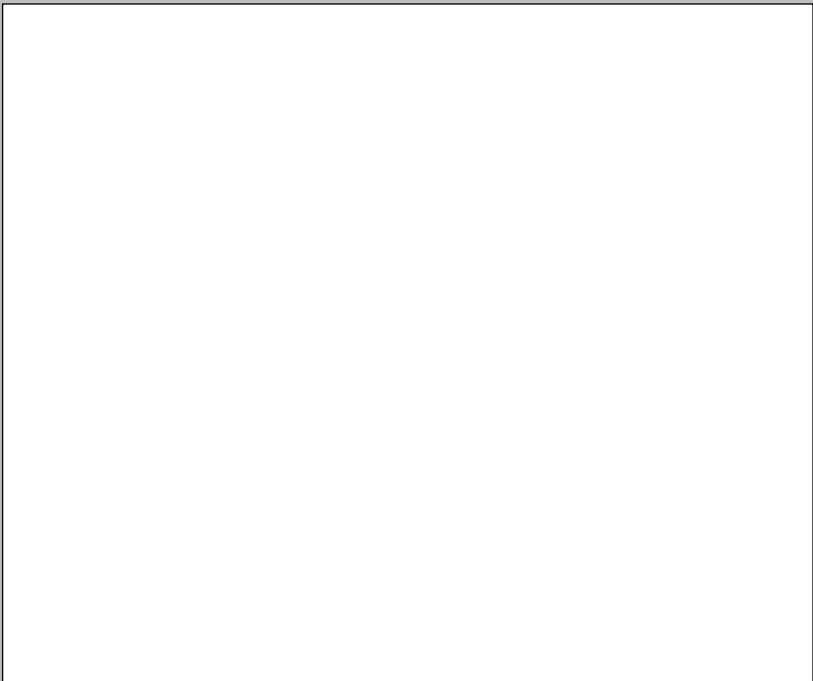
a new movement a new left

Central London 6-13 July

For a brochure phone 020 7538 2707 Website: www.swp.org.uk/marxism

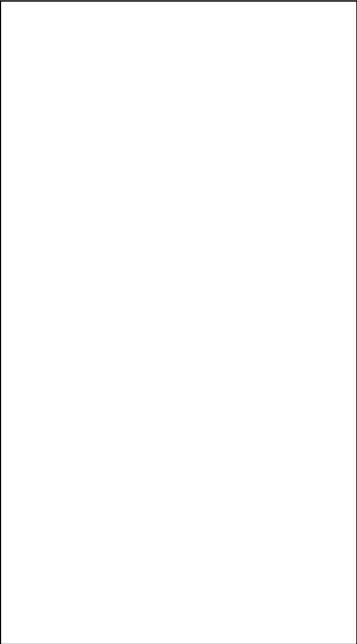


POLICE ON last week’s May Day protest



A WORKERS’ delegation in Quebec

Reform or revolution?



Picture: JESS HURD

SPIRIT OF rebellion

THE MAY Day protest in London last week forced sections of the media briefly to treat seriously the arguments of the anti-capitalist movement.

Channel 4 included a discussion on one of the central issues facing the movement. Can we achieve our goals by reforms to the present system or do we need revolution?

George Monbiot, the *Guardian*’s excellent columnist and one of the keynote speakers on the recent Globalise Resistance tour, explained why he believed in reform.

Mass protests are important, he argued, but they have to remain non-violent and at the end of the day there is no alternative to democratising and pressuring existing institutions.

Our ultimate aim has to be a democratically elected world parliament to control the multinationals.

Such arguments have been taking place for a century and a half, since the Chartist movement in Britain was split over “moral force” versus “physical force”.

The “reform” option usually seems the most “practical” to people at first, especially where there is a parliamentary system.

But in practice it is not long before many activists become disillusioned with it.

They see those they elected to take a

fighting stance against the system all too often end up becoming spokespeople for the system.

Ken Livingstone, after a long record of supporting demonstrations and criticising police methods, rushed to congratulate the police thugs who used their batons so freely on the May Day protest.

A good half of the present New Labour cabinet were left wing supporters of Tony Benn 20 years ago.

Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour prime minister who deserted to the Tories in 1931, was once a star of Labour’s left wing.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

Such betrayals are not an accident. They flow from a deep flaw in the reform argument.

It sees parliament as the power centre. “Control it and you control the system,” is the claim. But the real core of the present system lies elsewhere.

Two hundred companies, run by perhaps 1,500 unelected directors, dominate the economy.

They make life very difficult for any government that challenges their interests.

They admit this when they say they will not invest in any country, region or city that does not dance to their tune.

The generals, judges, police chiefs and top civil servants are not elected either.

They are overwhelmingly from the

upper class—some 80 percent of generals and judges went to expensive public schools.

They all insist “politics” must not interfere with their actions. What they mean is that they must be immune from democratic control from below.

In practice they are infinitely more attentive to the desires of their friends in big business than to the rest of us, who they still think of as the servant class.

When a police officer hits you with a truncheon, they are giving the orders.

They consciously set out to impose their will on any government that starts off even mildly left wing.

So top Treasury civil servants colluded with bankers and industrialists who moved money abroad to force Labour governments to do what they wanted in 1931, 1966 and 1976.

And an army that boasted it was built on the “British” model overthrew an elected government in Chile in 1973 that was reluctant to jump into line.

Big business and the state rarely need to go so far.

In office left wing politicians usually decide very quickly the way to “get things done” is to placate those with money and power.

Like Ken Livingstone they attack their own supporters.

It is hardly surprising that some activists turn in disgust to the idea of immediate, violent action against property, the politicians or the police.

In reality, however, this is no more a road to successfully getting rid of the system than that of the reformers.

A few broken windows, or even a few bombed buildings and a few injured police thugs, will not stop the giant multinationals from making many millions of pounds each day and wrecking billions of people’s lives.

Indeed those in power can sometimes welcome such actions as diverting attention away from the violence of the present system.

After all, every police force in the world uses provocateurs to try to discredit opponents of the system.

Revolutions do not occur because small bodies of people organise violent action.

They break out when the great mass of people whose work keeps the system going move into action on their own behalf.

Such revolutions have been a regular feature of human history. And they have been much more frequent during the brief 200 or so years of modern capitalism than under any previous system.

Britain is one of the very few European states not to experience some sort of revolutionary upheaval in the 20th century.

Capitalism is by its very nature an unplanned, global system, subject to sudden wars and economic crises.

People suddenly find they cannot go on living in the old way. They are faced with a choice between enduring a terrible worsening of their lives and fighting back.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

The fightback does not always occur. But when it does it throws the whole of society into crisis.

Unable to solve its problems at our expense, the ruling class can split down the middle.

Those who give the orders in industry, finance, the army and the police begin scrapping with each other, even though this weakens their hold on the rest of us.

At the same time vast numbers of working people begin to question things they have taken for granted in the past.

Ideas become common currency that were previously confined to a few committed revolutionary socialist activists.

It begins to cut with the grain to talk of workers seizing control of the industries where they labour and defending them physically against the forces of the state.

Groups arise among the rank and file of the armed forces who begin to challenge the power of the upper class officers.

Strike and occupation committees can become a network of elected delegates—of workers’ councils—which unite the working population as a whole in opposition to the old order.

The road is then open to revolutionary change with the backing of the mass of people and using the minimal necessary force.

Such demands seem very impractical

to most people during “normal times”, when they are resigned to putting up with whatever the system offers them.

They do, however, begin to make sense when the whole political, social and economic system is thrown into question.

But even then they have to be argued for and acted upon.

It is here that the role of revolutionaries becomes all important.

Even in revolutionary times, there are still people in every workplace and locality putting across the old ideas promoted by the capitalist media.

These ideas seek to divide worker from worker with racism, nationalism and deference to the upper classes.

There are also people putting across the line of the reformers, that we have to keep the existing system intact and then change it slowly.

Together they can hold workers back from taking action, so giving time for the ruling class to get its act together again and take its revenge on us.

This is what happened in Germany and Italy after World War One and in Chile in 1973.

At these points in history the arguments between reform and revolution quite literally become a question of life and death.

Similar occasions will recur in the 21st century, under the impact of economic crises, star wars, global warming and the impoverishment of whole continents.

We are not, of course, at this point in Britain today.

The fightback against the system is only very slowly recovering from the defeats of the 1980s.

That is why the most urgent immediate task is to build united action between all those who criticise the existing system and the Blair government from the left.

Through the anti-capitalist movement, the Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party, revolutionaries can build resistance to the system along with many thousands of others who are still half attracted by notions of reform.

But part of working with people is discussing with them the road to ultimate success—getting rid of capitalism altogether.

MAY DAY protesters wanting fundamental change

in my view

Charming tale is bad history

THE BBC'S blockbuster *A History of Britain* series, presented by historian Simon Schama, started up again this week.

It looked at one of the most important events in British, and world, history.

Revolution and war swept Britain in the 1640s. The world was "turned upside down", the king beheaded and a republic declared.

The revolution reshaped Britain forever, and was a key link in the chain that stretched through revolutionary upheavals in the following century.

That chain of events shattered the old feudal order and ushered in the modern capitalist world.

Good material, you might think, especially for as good a storyteller as Schama can be.

Schama can grab and keep your attention. As one reviewer aptly put it, he is "the history teacher you never had".

But while his style may be better than what most of us had to put up with when being taught history at school, the content of his lessons is not.

It is about great people. The mass of people never get a look in except as some unknown, usually threatening, mob.

And for all Schama's glossy presentation, the average GCSE student would have a better grasp of the English Revolution than this series does.

According to Schama, everyone in England was happy with the set-up in the early 17th century.

Why did this Eden plunge into revolution and war? Well, the king had an inferiority complex in relation to his older brother who had died.

Rotten politics

So Charles thought he'd have a war with Spain.

And well, you know, one thing sort of led to another, and before you knew it you'd had a civil war and the king's head was off.

What was happening to English society? Why were traditional ideas of deference and religion changing? The questions are not even asked.

Of the real and exciting story of the revolution there is not a breath.

The great upsurge of ideas, the ferment of discussion and debate, is passed over in silence.

So too is the spread of radical ideas within the revolutionary New Model Army, the elected Agitators, and the great debates on property, wealth and democracy.

The radical Levellers and their courageous leader John Lilburne got not a mention.

The approach is no surprise to anyone familiar with Schama.

Around a decade ago he shot to public prominence on the occasion of the anniversary of another revolution, in 1789 in France.

His book *Citizens* was a bestselling account of that revolution. It was perhaps the very worst book published in that anniversary year.

Like his series, it was a story engagingly told. But it bore little relation to real history, and was designed to reinforce a reactionary picture of the past and present.

In *Citizens* the French Revolution happened because of an addiction to "clubby sociability".

The great revolutionary leader Jean Paul Marat is presented as "paranoid" and not to be trusted because "his eyes were not quite aligned".

The mass of people are a violent, dark mob interrupting "polite discourse" at the top of society.

This is not only rotten politics today—it makes for poor history. So Schama achieves a remarkable feat.

He makes the really exciting bits of history, when "polite discourse" at the top was interrupted and the world was "turned upside down" sound dull as ditchwater.

by PAUL McGARR

exhibition

IRAQI KURD refugees in 1997 mourning family members killed by Saddam Hussein's troops

by JANINE
BRODERICK

A BRILLIANT exhibition by documentary photographer Sebastiao Salgado is currently on show at Walsall's New Art Gallery.

It charts the movements of refugees, displaced peoples and peasants from 40 different countries.

Salgado shows the amazing resilience of people in the most desperate conditions.

His camera takes us to the refugee camps of Kosovo, Kurdistan and Rwanda, and to the shanty towns of the mega-cities Shanghai, Bombay and Manila.

Salgado's photographs are a powerful blow against those who claim that asylum seekers are "bogus".

■ **"Migrations: Humanity in Transition" is on at Walsall's New Art Gallery until 10 June and then tours around Britain.**

book

Love in very cold climate

by JUDY COX

ONE CONSISTENT theme that runs through Sebastian Faulks's highly successful novels is how the 20th century was dominated by wars.

In *Birdsong*, set in the First World War, and *Charlotte Gray*, set in the Second World War, Faulks explored how war shaped the personal lives of those involved.

His new book, *On Green Dolphin Street*, examines the Cold War. It is set in the US in 1959.

The novel centres on political journalist Frank Renzo, career diplomat Charlie van der Linden and his wife, Mary.

These are successful people who knock back dry martinis and inhabit jazz clubs—the political glitterati of Washington and New York.

But their lives are controlled by the increasing frenzy of the election contest between the youthful John F Kennedy and the shady Republican, Richard Nixon.

A new era is dawning and Kennedy is about to be elected to the White House. But there is no triumphalism in this brave new America.

Behind the wealth and influence the characters

are haunted by the past.

Through flashbacks, Frank Renzo recreates the experience of war in Europe, Japan and Vietnam. He wonders if the men he meets have also taken lives.

Frank has no political beliefs, yet he is still recovering from the impact of the McCarthyite witch-hunts.

One of the most powerful passages in the book deals with racism.

Frank recounts covering the trial of two white men who murdered a 14 year old black boy, Emmet Till, because he was cheeky to a white woman.

The murderers are acquitted despite their public bragging about the crime.

The impact of this era of spying and lying is to feed the characters' cynicism and despair.

The novel never reaches the intensity of *Birdsong*. But it is an emotionally engaging book that evokes an atmosphere of post-war paranoia and futility of life for those with nothing left to believe in.

film

Corelli's mandolin is off key

by CLAIRE DISSINGTON

CAPTAIN Corelli's Mandolin is the long awaited adaptation of the bestselling novel by Louis de Bernières.

The novel was hugely popular but attracted controversy because of its historical distortions and inaccuracies.

The story is set on the Greek island of Cephalonia, and is centred on the romance between Pelagia, daughter of the local doctor, and Captain Antonio Corelli, an Italian officer who is part of the occupying Italian forces.

In 1943 the Italian armies tried to withdraw from World War Two. Hitler was not prepared to lose Greece and ordered his armies to seize the areas previously occupied by the Italians.

Cephalonia is historically important because

there the Italian troops made a stand and fought back against the Nazis, resulting in the horrific massacre of almost 10,000 Italian soldiers.

De Bernières got his information from right wing sources.

He painted the Communist led Greek Resistance fighters as thugs and rapists who never came to the aid of the Italians, and played no part in fighting against the occupying German forces.

Fails

Every serious account of those years shows that de Bernières' account totally distorts the truth.

In view of this lie it was hardly surprising that the film crew met with angry resistance from the Greek islanders.

This forced the rewriting of the script in order for them to be allowed to film on Cephalonia.

From this point of view the film succeeds where the novel fails.

On the screen Greek partisans work with the Italians and are brave fighters against the Nazis.

However, the film fails to convey the real scale of the massacres or the misery of life for the Greeks under occupation.

It also fails to make a

compelling romance between the two main characters, Corelli and Pelagia, who are played by Nicholas Cage and Penelope Cruz.

Cruz is not as fiery as the Pelagia in the novel and Cage is miscast. He is too old and fails to make a romantic musical hero. John Hurt is excellent as the Greek doctor, but the other characters are quite shallow.

It is interesting that Greek resistance to the lies about the proud history of the partisans in World War Two forced Hollywood to politically transform the film from the novel.

But despite that and the stunning scenery it is a poor film.

preview

HOMEGROUND (Mon, 7.30pm, BBC2). A behind the scenes look at the latest movie by left wing filmmaker Ken Loach.

THE END OF POLITICS (Sun, 8pm, C4). The anti-capitalist debate hits our screens. Noreena Hertz, academic and writer, gives her view of globalisation.

PANORAMA (Sun, 10.15pm, BBC1). Exposure of giant pharmaceutical companies presents evidence that companies knew of the dangers of tranquillisers long before they were forced to admit it.

Why I'm voting socialist



‘I’VE LOOKED at the literature for all the candidates, and Mike Jeffries, the Socialist Alliance candidate in Telford, has the only honest view of the lot.

Many people in my PCS civil servants' union branch are voting Socialist Alliance.

New Labour haven't done what they said about trade unions—they've kept the anti trade union laws. They're a Tory government under another name.

The way they talk about asylum seekers is a disgrace. Labour are not part of the labour movement any more.’

■ **MARTIN CLEMENTS**, branch secretary PCS Revenue Group, Telford (personal capacity)



where
we
stand

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

—GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS— Paul Foot's book—a big seller

BOOKMARKS, the socialist bookshop in London, has sold over 4,000 copies of the pamphlet by Paul Foot *Why You Should Vote Socialist*, price £1.50.

Neil from Bookmarks told us, "There is massive enthusiasm for *Why You Should Vote Socialist*, and lots of in-

dividuals are ringing up to find out about the pamphlet. People are buying three or four copies at a time for friends and work colleagues.

"Bookmarks is doing a reprint of the pamphlet after selling out of the original print run.

"People say, 'It's really

good—it's great to read Paul Foot taking on the ideas of Blair.'

"There are imaginative ways that the pamphlet is being sold.

"A group of people in a pub with copies of *Why You Should Vote Socialist* were asked by the landlady what it

was about. The landlady thought it was a great idea and bought ten copies to sell behind the bar.

"Paul Foot's pamphlet really sells itself.

"Loads of people who are checking out the left opposition to New Labour are looking around for ideas.

"It's a vital asset in the coming election campaign. Don't be without it. To place bulk orders of *Why You Should Vote Socialist* contact Bookmarks."

■ **Bookmarks, 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE. Phone 020 7637 1848. www.bookmarks.uk.com**

VOTE SOCIALIST

How to get active

SOCIALIST candidates will be standing across England, Scotland and Wales at the general election. Some of those where a decision to stand has been taken are listed here. To get involved phone the constituency number, or phone 020 7536 9696 in England, 07752 830 405 in Wales, and 0141 221 7714 or 0131 557 0426 in Scotland.

ALDRIDGE-BROWNHILLS

John Rothery

ASHFIELD

George Watson
☎ 01773 836 677

BARNLEY CENTRAL

Henry Rajch

BASILDON

Dick Duane
01268 459 320

BIRMINGHAM ERDINGTON

Steve Godward
☎ 07788 770 741

BIRMINGHAM NORTHFIELD

Clive Walder

BIRMINGHAM PERRY BARR

Caroline Johnson

BIRMINGHAM SPARKBROOK & SMALL HEATH

Salman Mirza

BLACKBURN

Jim Nichol

BOOTLE

Pete Glover

BRADFORD SOUTH

Ateeq Siddique
☎ 07966 416 007

BRENTFORD & ISLEWORTH

Danny Faith
☎ 07958 996 777

BRENT SOUTH

Mick McDonnell
☎ 07940 510 906

BRISTOL EAST

Andy Pryor

BRISTOL SOUTH

Brian Drummond

CAMBERWELL & PECKHAM

John Mulrenan
☎ 07941 488 925

CAMBRIDGE

Howard Senter
☎ 07968 940 777

CARDIFF CENTRAL

Julian Goss

CARDIFF SOUTH & PENARTH

Dave Bartlett

CARLISLE

Paul Wilcox
☎ 07808 422 304

CHESTERFIELD

Jeannie Robinson
☎ 07778 480 484

COVENTRY NORTH EAST

Dave Nellist

COVENTRY SOUTH

Rob Windsor

CRAWLEY

Muriel Hirsch
☎ 07941 117 874

CROYDON NORTH

Don Madgwick

DAGENHAM

Berlyne Hamilton
☎ 020 8586 7821

DARLINGTON

Alan Docherty

DONCASTER CENTRAL

Janet Terry

DUDLEY SOUTH

Angela Thompson
☎ 07759 809 348

DULWICH & WEST NORWOOD

Brian Kelly
☎ 07752 200 594

EALING ACTON & SHEPHERD'S

BUSH
Nick Grant
☎ 07718 352 589

EDMONTON

Howard Medwell

EXETER

Fran Choules
☎ 07939 558 115

GILLINGHAM

Wynford Vaughan Thomas

GLOUCESTER

☎ 07879 227 877

GREENWICH & WOOLWICH

Kirstie Paton

HACKNEY SOUTH & SHOREDITCH

Cecilia Prosper
☎ 07946 380 370

HAMPSTEAD & HIGHGATE

to be selected

HARLOW

John Hobbs

HOLBORN & ST PANCRAS

Candy Udwin
☎ 07904 268 178

HORNSEY & WOOD GREEN

Louise Christian
☎ 07801 789 297

HOVE

Andy Richards
☎ 07940 929 565

HUDDERSFIELD

Graham Hellawell
☎ 01484 324 739

IPSWICH

Peter Leech

ISLINGTON SOUTH & FINSBURY

Janine Booth
☎ 07930 454 271

KINGSTON UPON HULL NORTH

Roger Smith
☎ 0831 396 895

LEEDS CENTRAL

Steve Johnston
☎ 07887 723 328

LEICESTER WEST

Steve Score

LEWISHAM DEPTFORD

Ian Page
☎ 07741 004 950

LEWISHAM EAST

Jean Kysow

LEYTON & WANSTEAD

Sally Labern
☎ 07973 251 984

LIVERPOOL RIVERSIDE

Cathy Wilson



☎ 07812 467 714

LIVERPOOL WAVERTREE

Mark O'Brien
☎ 07947 645 289

LUTON SOUTH

Joe Hearne
☎ 07941 861 762

MAKERFIELD

Malcolm Jones

MANCHESTER BLACKLEY

Karen Reissmann
☎ 0161 795 5468

MANCHESTER WITHINGTON

John Clegg
☎ 0161 861 8390

MIDDLESBROUGH

Geoff Kerr Morgan

MILTON KEYNES SOUTH WEST

☎ 07931 725 633

NEATH

Huw Pudner
☎ 01792 415 459

NEWARK

Ian Thomson

NORTHAMPTON NORTH

Gordon White
☎ 07941 861 762

NORWICH SOUTH

Dave Manningham

☎ 07808 988 320

NOTTINGHAM EAST

Pete Radcliff
☎ 0115 977 4333

OXFORD EAST

John Lister
☎ 07929 618 579

PLYMOUTH DEVONPORT

Tony Staunton
☎ 07803 620 390

PONTEFRAC & CASTLEFORD

John Gill

POPLAR & CANNING TOWN

Kambiz Boomla
☎ 07939 951 376

PORTSMOUTH SOUTH

John Molyneux
☎ 07801 290 411

READING EAST

Darren Williams

REGENT'S PARK & KENSINGTON NORTH

China Miéville
☎ 07946 349 002

ROTHERHAM

Freda Smith

SALFORD

Peter Grant
☎ 07950 486 859

SHEFFIELD BRIGHTSIDE

Brian Wilson
☎ 07733 012 993

SHEFFIELD CENTRAL

Nick Riley

SOUTHAMPTON ITCHEN

Gavin Marsh

SOUTHAMPTON TEST

Mark Abel
☎ 07811 210 036

STEVENAGE

Steve Glennon

STOCKTON SOUTH

Lawrie Coombes

STREATHAM

Greg Tucker
☎ 07703 131 206

SWANSEA WEST

Alec Thraves

TELFORD

Mike Jeffries
☎ 07866 220 305

TORFAEN

Steve Bell

TOTTENHAM

Weyman Bennett
☎ 07808 612 454

TYNE BRIDGE

Terry Rodgers

TYNESIDE NORTH

Pete Burnett

VAUXHALL

Theresa Bennett
☎ 07796 304 546

WAKEFIELD

Mick Griffiths

WALSALL NORTH

Dave Church
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WALSALL SOUTH

Peter Smith

WARWICK & LEAMINGTON

Alison Claire Kime
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WATFORD

Jon Berry
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WAVENEY

Rupert Mallin
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WIGAN

Dave Lowe

YORK

Frank Ormston
☎ 07950 931 617

Davey Landels

HAMILTON NORTH & BELLSHILL

Sharon Blackall

HAMILTON SOUTH

Gena Mitchell

INVERNESS EAST, NAIRN & LOCHABER

Steve Arnott

INVERNESS WEST

Stuart Topp

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obituary



George Pogmore

A SHADOW was cast over successful May Day protests in York last week due to the sudden death of George Pogmore.

George encountered the brutalities of capitalism in the 1950s when he was conscripted to fight in Malaya. He quickly started asking awkward questions and was beaten up as a result.

Known as "Poggy" to his friends and comrades, George joined the International Socialists, the forerunner of the SWP, in the early 1970s when he worked as an inspector on the buses.

He used every opportunity to sell *Socialist Worker*, always managing to outwit the managers in the process. Such was his success that he built up a regular sale of 40 papers a week.

But this was not enough for George who could regularly be found in the bus workers' pub, the Corner Pin, seeking out political arguments with his workmates and surrounding them in a cloud of smoke from his pipe.

As a result of all this work George started one of the International Socialists' first ever factory branches.

Arrested

In the late 1970s George played an active role in fighting the rise of the fascist National Front.

He was arrested whilst trying to stop the NF leafletting in York and called "the Godfather of York socialists" in court. Poggy's support was so great that his fine was paid off by collections within one day.

Ill health kept George out of political activity for much of the 1980s, but he always remained an avid reader of *Socialist Worker*.

When the Tories were rocked by the movement against pit closures in 1992, George went to hear his old friend Tony Cliff speak at a public meeting. George, now in his 60s, once again became York's most active SWP member.

Poggy homed in on a political discussion at his local pub in Bishopthorpe.

As a result he recruited two retired post office engineers to the SWP. The three became known as the Bishopthorpe Bolsheviks and quickly started the new Acomb SWP branch.

Right up to the weekend before his death at the age of 73, George was selling *Socialist Worker* on a Saturday, at his local pub in the evening, and delivering 16 more.

Poggy spent 30 years making socialists. And he made us laugh at the same time.

His version of the Eton boating song was legendary. One round of the Internationale was never enough. Typically George asked that when his coffin disappeared behind the curtain a hand should emerge waving a copy of *Socialist Worker*.

From all those who you touched George, thanks. You will always inspire us. And that will be a pound for the paper.

■YORK SWP

An ethical capitalism?

SOME 100 opponents of the proposed Ilisu Dam attended the AGM of Balfour Beatty.

As the proud holders of single 50p shares, we were there to expose the company for bidding to build a dam which will make 78,000 Kurds in Turkey homeless.

The meeting was scheduled to last 30 minutes but the directors had to put up with three and a half hours of hostile questioning.

It was like Balfour Beatty was on trial—and not just over Ilisu.

An RMT union member forced the directors to concede that they knew the line at Hatfield was hazardous. A construction worker spoke of the four deaths on Balfour Beatty sites last year.

Throughout the meeting 15 of us stood in T-shirts which spelled out "Stop the Ilisu dam".

Many in the room had been on the May Day protests in central London the day before.

We all knew "shareholder activism" isn't going to make these greedy bigots into caring human beings. But for all their bluster and spin, they are worried.

□PETE JACKSON, East London

Unity in Quebec

I WAS involved in the demonstrations against the Free Trade Areas of the Americas in Quebec City recently.

The process of winning layers of workers to join the direct action marches began almost right after Seattle, when revolutionary socialists in the student movement organised support for an occupation at a brewery.

The workers toured colleges and student unions, and helped get the company's beer off the shelves in campus bars.

This act of solidarity has since built into a real working collaboration between members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and young activists.

Blockades

It meant that in the run-up to Quebec City the auto workers' union sent 25 members to a direct action training weekend to learn how to do blockades and lockdowns.

Some of the key CAW organisers for Quebec City were able to work with other militants and win them to forming an affinity group that went from 35 people to 2,000 by the time of the march.

The anti-capitalist movement has the opportunity to begin to cut against trade union leaders. Central to doing this is building support for workers when they are in struggle, and forging links between workers and young activists. Trust me—it pays off when the cops are gassing you.

□RITCH WHYMAN, Canada



CARNIVAL ON the street last week

May Day and beyond

THE BEST thing about the May Day demonstration was its impact. But being there was pretty good too.

There was a great feeling of unity against globalisation, despite the ideological differences between the anarchists, socialists, Greens and animal rights groups I was with.

But what struck me most was the immense number of people my age—17. I was surrounded

by teenagers, all shouting, "Whose streets? Our streets," like they did in Seattle.

Chased

I had the opposite experience from those hemmed into Oxford Circus by the cops. I found myself joining the Wombles and, peaceful though we were, was nonetheless chased by police in riot gear across London for two hours.

Now in my further education college people who say they are "not political" are discussing capitalism and socialism like never before.

People are really questioning the system in a way I have never seen—not even after Seattle.

The battle that is taking place is one of ideas and we are making huge gains. May Day 2001 marks another "fork in the road". The more that gets said about it the better.

□JETHRO BOR, North London

— Your views on May Day 2001 —

AS SOMEONE who works for an investment company on Oxford Street, I saw the paranoia and hysteria around May Day at its worst.

Those frightened by reports of mass destruction were given the day off. Those who came in were advised to dress down—allowed even the luxury of 1980s torn jeans.

It seemed futile to argue against this viewpoint. But thankfully I got hold of Mark Steel's article in the *Independent*, which superbly debunked the crass lies of the media and the police.

I e-mailed it to everyone and it really opened up the debate. People thought it made really good points. I was expecting to be told off for sending round a political e-mail but instead I was thanked. Even our boss was

furiously at the way he was being duped!

□AYHAM ZEKRA, West London

THE FIRST discussion at our unified Scottish Socialist Party branch meeting in Aberdeen was to make sure that May Day was the biggest, most popular carnival for workers' rights and anti-capitalism the north east of Scotland has ever seen.

Like many trade unionists in Britain over the past 25 years I have been on the receiving end of baton charges, mounted police and no doubt agent provocateurs in the midst of legitimate peaceful protest.

It really makes my blood boil to see the destruction of this basic civil liberty—the right to protest.

This is Britain under New

Labour—the stockpiling of rubber bullets in preparation for May Day. The urgent need for socialists to break away and unite in opposition to this is inescapable.

□DOD FORREST, Cummington, Moray

DID PEOPLE hear Ken Livingstone announce that he wanted "business as usual" in London last Tuesday?

It would be difficult to imagine anyone missing the point so comprehensively.

□BRIAN SMITH, Shetland

ON SEVERAL television broadcasts the movement has been described by the media as wishing to abolish all private property.

Perhaps *Socialist Worker* could run an article demonstrating the falseness of this in

terms of individual property as opposed to corporate ownership without conscience. I feel this is the concept the media seizes on and misinterprets.

□ERIC SMALLLEY

"THIS ISN'T the kind of Third Way I envisaged," was (probably) the only comment given by Anthony Giddens on hearing of the circuitous route taken by 60 students from the London School of Economics (LSE) on their way to the World Bank in central London, with our march provoking panicked shop-shutting the length of Covent Garden.

A good seven hours illegal detention was later had by all. Who is this Ken Livingstone anyway, and has he ever had his banner on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph*? It's not

quite 1968 (yet), but the potential for a mass movement against neo-liberal globalisation at LSE is there.

□TOM WHITTAKER and JAMES MEADWAY, London School of Economics

THE RELENTLESS attacks and hysteria by the press in the run-up to May Day meant that I was preparing to have to defend the protests at London Guildhall University, where I work.

However, the reaction I got shows we were right to stand up to the intimidation. There was shock and disgust about the actions of the police.

Our detainment for up to eight hours was greeted with disbelief. People thought it was the police who looked aggressive and violent.

The photographing of pro-

testers was also felt to be wrong—it was clear that we were being punished for daring to take to the streets.

We need to build this resistance at work and in the unions. Next stop is Genoa.

□LORNA ROSBOTTOM, UNISON steward, London Guildhall University (personal capacity)

THE ATMOSPHERE at work reminded me of after the poll tax "riot". People were asking me if I was there, am I a socialist or an anarchist, and what is the difference?

There was a general buzz of interest and support. I work for the local paper and one colleague wanted to put a green mohican on a picture of Roger Gale, our local MP!

□JON FLAIG, Margate

In brief

MEMBERS OF the ship officers' NUMAST union on Coxflexip Stena Offshore vessels have voted for strike action.

NUMAST members voted by 80 percent for strike action, and by 87 percent for action short of a strike, over management's 3 percent pay offer.

A 72-hour strike is planned later this month. Talks were to take place at ACAS this week.

AROUND 800 supporters of the campaign to save the Neptune's Kingdom swimming pool, known locally as Gorton Tub, turned out for last Saturday's fun day and protest.

At 3.30pm those not in the water marched to the A57 Hyde Road, complete with balloons and banners, and blocked traffic in protest at plans to close the pool.

AROUND 100 people, black and white, revived Huddersfield's May Day tradition by marching through the town behind Mrs Asghar, widow of Mohammed Asghar, and their children.

The demonstrators were demanding justice for the killing of her husband outside his own restaurant last summer.

Messages of support for the campaign should be sent c/o KRAFT, Unit 11, Ray Street Industrial Estate, Huddersfield.

AROUND 20 people protested outside Exeter Crown Court last week in defence of Iranian refugee Farrokh Shiri. Despite a vicar offering to let him stay in his house, bail was refused, and Farrokh could face deportation in two weeks time.

THE COMMITTEE to Defend Asylum Seekers has launched a national open statement attacking politicians' use of the race card.

Signatories already include Bruce Kent, Liz Davies, Mike Marqusee and Mark Serwotka.

Petitions and donations: Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers, BCM Box 4289, London WC1X 3XX. Website: www.defend-asylum.org. E-mail info@defend-asylum.org



SATURDAY 12 MAY
Food, politics and profits. Conference organised by Globalise Resistance, 9.30am to 5pm, Glasgow Caledonian University, Cowcaddens Road.

SATURDAY 12 MAY
Open meeting for all left wing activists in MSF and AEEU, 11am to 4pm, Preston College. Info: seth@stacking.demon.co.uk

MONDAY 14 MAY
Blockade of Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment, from 7am, Aldermaston, near Reading. Organised by London CND and Trident Ploughshares. Info: lrcndnvrn@supanet.com

TUESDAY 15 MAY
The Middle East and the socialist tradition. Socialist Worker meeting, 7.30pm, Room G3, SOAS, London WC1.

WEDNESDAY 16 MAY
Globalise Resistance counter-conference, 5pm to 10pm, Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Headington, Oxford.

SATURDAY 26 MAY
Resistance conference, 10.30am to 6pm, Malcolm X Centre, Ashley Road, Bristol. Info: www.resistanceconference.org.uk

Socialist election campaign

No time to lose!

AS TONY Blair prepared to fire the starting gun for the general election campaign last week, socialist campaigners were already out of the blocks.

Across Britain they are organising to ensure that the socialist message reaches as many people as possible in the coming weeks.

SCARBOROUGH: Socialist Alliance supporters were out last weekend campaigning against the decision by the TransBus firm to shut down its Plaxton's bus factory with the loss of 700 jobs.

Scores of people signed the Socialist Alliance petition demanding the nationalisation of the factory and pledging backing for whatever action workers take.

NORTHAMPTON: The Socialist Alliance was out leafleting the British Timkens roller bearing factory, which is threatened with closure. Some 900 jobs could be axed as the multinational owners seek to "increase profitability".

Socialist Alliance members and shop stewards from the factory are helping organise a public meeting over the closure threat.

BRISTOL: The Socialist Alliance has turned to poetry to help its campaign!

They have been out across the city petitioning against bus privatisation. "After being given a chance to sign our petition demanding the return of the buses to public hands, weary bus users are

being given a poem to cheer them up," says a local Socialist Alliance member.

"People are fed up with the paltry service offered by First Group, the current operators."

YORK: Socialist Alliance prospective parliamentary candidate Frank Ormston addressed a march through the city centre last Saturday against George Bush's "Son of Star Wars" plan.

Protesters collected signatures in the town before marching with a banner bearing a bullseye and the slogan "York—bullseye." It highlighted the fact that the city is near both the Fylingdales and Menwith Hill radar stations which will play a key role in the Star Wars project.

REGENT'S PARK AND NORTH KENSINGTON: Socialist Alliance prospective parliamentary candidate China Miéville was manhandled out

of a west London council chamber by police last week. He had joined a parents' protest against a plan by the local Tory council to close a nursery.

LEYTON AND WANSTEAD: Socialist Alliance supporters in east London got a brilliant response when they were out last week campaigning against privatisation in local schools. "A dozen parents joined the Socialist Alliance after signing the petition," says Ben. "It was easy. When we asked, 'Do you want to join?' they said, 'Where do I sign up?'"

POPLAR AND CANNING TOWN: Prospective parliamentary candidate Kambiz Boomla is at the centre of a campaign against racism following a recent murder. He was among those who spoke at a 100-strong mainly Bengali meeting last Sunday.

More resign from Labour

THE SOCIALIST Alliance is winning over a growing number of Labour Party members.

SKELMERSDALE: The Socialist Alliance was launched last week, and among its members is Frank Riley, former deputy leader of West Lancashire District Council.

BOLTON: The Socialist

Alliance meeting last week was chaired by Nick Hallet, who has just resigned from the Labour Party after more than ten years membership.

CHERTSEY: Former Labour councillor Chris Lovibond says he now "supports the Socialist Alliance", and is asking if Labour Party leaders "will do me the honour of expelling me".

Stop George W Bush



Picture: GUY TAYLOR

OVER 600 people protested outside the US embassy last Saturday against George Bush's decision to condemn the planet to global warming.

President Bush has turned his back on the Kyoto agreement, and Blair has backed him.

CND, Friends of the Earth, the Socialist Alliance, demonstrators from the 1970s and students all joined together.

We formed a human chain around the embassy, and to the shout of "Reclaim the streets" went on a march of

solidarity to the Maldives embassy.

The Maldives are a group of islands which, on current predictions, will be underwater by the year 2050 because of rising sea levels caused by global warming.

●STEVE SMITH

OVER 200 people attended the "No Star Wars" conference in Leeds last weekend.

The conference was hosted by Yorkshire Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Speakers included Karl Grossman, Caroline Lucas MEP and Bruce Kent.

During speeches and workshops the links were made between globalisation, corporate involvement and National Missile Defence (NMD).

One banner read, "George W Bush—the godfather of ballistic missile defence, the armed wing of globalisation."

There was recognition of a need for all types of opposition to work together to combat the common enemy of NMD.

The mood was optimistic, with people sharing ideas and leaving to step up their own campaigns. For more information see www.peacevision.org.uk

●PAUL WILLIAMSON

Unity makes a big impact

THE MERGER of the Scottish Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party in Scotland has given the socialist election campaign a boost.

United socialist contingents were a lively presence on the traditional May Day marches in both Glasgow and Edinburgh last weekend.

Around 2,000 people marched in Glasgow and over 1,000 in Edinburgh.

Dozens joined the SSP, and the Scottish Socialist Voice, the paper of the SSP, went down a storm, with hundreds of copies sold.

In Glasgow the united Scottish Socialist Party formed the largest single contingent on the May Day march.

The rally in Glasgow Green gave a very supportive

welcome to asylum rights campaigner Mohammad Naveen Asif, a refugee from Afghanistan. His call for an end to the racist lies of many politicians and newspapers was echoed by the main speaker, Tony Benn.

To massive applause, the veteran left wing MP called for support for refugees to be at the top of the socialist agenda.

Other campaigns represented on the platform included that for Surjit Singh Chhokar, the young Asian man killed by racists in Larnarkshire, and the dispute of striking photographers at the Scotsman newspaper.

For many activists, disillusionment with Blair is turning to excitement about the prospects for a united left in Scotland and beyond.

Postal workers

New tactics

RECENT BATTLES in the post have revealed new tactics by both Royal Mail and the national CWU union of officials. Activists need to organise to face a new challenge.

Around the beginning of the year unofficial action backed up by solidarity from other offices, won significant victories in, for example, Cardiff and Liverpool.

Management then raised the stakes by saying that in future they would consider dismissing anyone taking unofficial action.

At the same time national CWU union officials stopped simply denouncing "illegal" action and instead offered official ballots as soon as anyone walked out.

So the pattern of disputes at Glasgow (the strike against sexual harassment), Nottingham and Greenford has been as follows—workers walk out, bosses threaten dismissal, union officials arrive and emphasise management threats but also offer the possibility of a legal strike ballot.

This tactic has helped the Post Office to blunt some of the more recent strikes.

Unless activists are aware of this new situation and organise to stop sell-outs then rank and file organisation in the post could suffer a setback.

That would be disastrous as a national confrontation looms.

The danger of the strategy is that it breaks the momentum of action and leaves all the initiative in the hands of union leaders. Often, as in Glasgow, they will then try to

by CHARLIE KIMBER

wriggle out even of having a ballot, let alone a strike.

It took a local rebellion in Glasgow to get a ballot, and it has only just begun to be organised weeks after the original strike.

Then, as the ballot was about to begin this week, it was again delayed when managers threatened to sack 18 workers at a specialist sorting office in Wishaw, Lanarkshire.

There are problems even if ballots go ahead, are won, and the national union calls a strike.

Royal Mail will then move the mail to offices elsewhere. Are these workers supposed to do strikers' work while waiting for another ballot?

It is time to reassess the old traditions of walking out and staying out until a decent settlement is secured. That has been the formula for success in the post in recent years.

And rank and file militancy and organisation can also make sure that nobody gets sacked as a result of such actions.

NDO

POSTAL WORKERS in the N1 delivery section of the NDO office in north London struck officially for 24 hours last week. Not a single worker crossed the picket line.

MARCH TO DEFEND NDO

Saturday 26 May
Assemble 11.30am, Gibson Square, off Upper Street, Islington, London

The dispute is over a range of attacks, and a further 24-hour strike is planned next week.

The expected strike ballot, covering the entire north and north west London workforce, over the closure of NDO has been delayed after management offered temporary concessions and more talks.

Management are worried, but it is dangerous to keep putting off the ballot. There is a mood to fight now, and it should be used to win a complete victory.

Dynamex Friction Dynamics

Dynamex are all out

SOME 108 TGWU union members are on all-out strike in north west Wales.

Workers at the Dynamex Friction Dynamics (formerly Ferodo) plant began the official strike on 30 April after a ballot over the effective derecognition of their union.

Workers at the plant in Caernarfon, Gwynedd, have not had a pay rise for five years.

Their holiday entitlement has been hanged without consultation, and when workers reach production targets they are not paid the promised bonus—they are simply given increased targets.

The dispute has already been the subject of a half-hour documentary on S4C, the Welsh language television channel.

Factory boss Craig Smith is from the S, where he has faced court action over 3,300 asbestos-related cases resulting in outstanding claims worth \$300 billion.

When he bought the ex-Ferodo plant a few years ago, Smith got £1.4 million of public money from the Welsh

Development Agency.

He used that money to bring over obsolete equipment which the workers say has never been used.

This dispute is very important for north west Wales, where low wages are rife.

'Threatened'

There is solid local support for the strike. Just about every car passing the picket line toots its horn in support.

Gerald Parry from the strike committee says, "The boss has threatened to sack us and has been having some success hiring casual labour. But he must be worried because he's told us to take this week as holiday."

"We need to win this dispute, and call on all members of the TGWU and the local community to support us in any way they can."

■ **Messages of support and donations: c/o Tom Jones, TGWU Offices, Segontium Terrace, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.**

Health workers



MEDICAL SECRETARIES protested outside the Glasgow health board last week

South West Trains

GUARDS ON South West Trains (SWT) brought over 1,600 services to a standstill with a 24-hour strike last week.

SWT runs services into London's Waterloo station from Surrey, Hampshire and Dorset.

Even management claimed that only about 50 of its 1,700 scheduled services ran on Thursday.

The 700 guards are in the RMT rail union and were due to strike again on Friday of this week.

The RMT union is campaigning nationally to retain guards on services, and for a ten-point programme protecting their conditions.

That includes insisting

that guards' safety responsibilities are placed above commercial considerations.

Guards play a crucial role in safety, identifying problems and evacuating passengers. But train operating companies are pressuring them to put collecting fares above those responsibilities.

South West Trains management has tried to belittle the strike by claiming the issue is simply about the guards' uniform.

"This is about an intransigent management not listening to workers' concerns," said one guard at Waterloo Station.

"They are squeezing us and the public's safety."

Steel workers

THE FIGHT over pay and job cuts at William Cook's steelworks in Sheffield is being stepped up, as it becomes obvious that boss Peter Moore has no intention of negotiating.

Workers from the Heavy Foundry and the IMF Foundry are fighting against £120 a week pay cuts.

They voted to escalate their one and two day strikes to all-out action from next Wednesday, 16 May, after again being locked out when they were not on strike.

Workers in the Greensand Foundry, which is not affected by the cutbacks, will also announce the outcome of their ballot for action in support of their workmates this week.

The mood was clear at angry mass meetings last

Saturday of workers from all three foundries.

Workers have not had a pay rise for five years, and have had four contracts in the last two years.

Some 17 workers have now been sacked for refusing to sign the new contracts, and four have been made redundant.

But, as one striker said, "we voted to up the strikes to five days a week because we are being locked out anyway. Now we want to go out and win support from other depots."

Last Saturday £100 was collected by strikers at a stall in the town centre.

Solidarity is vital.

● **PHIL TURNER**

■ **Send messages of support and donations to Eddy Grimes, 116 Richmond Park Crescent, Sheffield S13 8HG.**

Big mood for strike

MEDICAL SECRETARIES in Scotland are balloting for strike action to fight for better pay.

Around 100 medical secretaries, and admin and clerical staff from UNISON branches across Scotland, from the Highlands to the Borders, met last Saturday to discuss the fight.

Everyone was clear they would not take low pay any longer.

Medical secretaries are furious at the way their pay has declined, as has recognition for their job.

The dispute is already encouraging others to fight.

One medical secretary from north Glasgow reported, "Our medical records staff asked the union, 'Why just secretaries?' So we arranged to have a meeting to explain our case to them, and said, 'If you want to take action as well we will support you 100 percent.'"

"We left the room with five extra stewards in medical records and more union members."

National union officials are fighting for regrading for medical secretaries from three to four.

They are to meet with NHS managers on 14 May at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh at 12 noon. A lobby is planned.

NHS bosses are worried

'There is a mood to fight'

about headlines saying 'Hospital Staff Set To Strike' in the run-up to the election.

A consultative ballot of medical secretaries in north Glasgow has already produced a 94 percent vote for strike action.

Around 200 medical secretaries demonstrated last week to highlight the dispute. They formed a picket line in the grounds of Stobhill Hospital at the North Glasgow University Hospitals NHS trust.

After the meeting everyone wanted to discuss what they could do, or how they could be a steward and were keen to hold meetings to build for the lobby.

There is a mood to fight!

● **DOUG MORGAN**

Oxford

OXFORD BLUES

HEALTH, LOCAL government and university workers marched together on Friday of last week through central Oxford, calling for "London pay for London prices".

The good turn-out, brilliant sunshine, bright banners and friendly reception from passers-by made this UNISON union march a resounding success.

Speakers at the rally pointed to the impossibility—particularly for young workers—of buying a home in Oxford.

An initial analysis from the union suggested that an average house was seven times the average wage.

Others spoke of the problems of living outside the city and commuting in—waiting for many hours each week in traffic jams. This lengthens people's working week, and destroys their leisure time and the environment.

The meeting received

with great applause greetings from other union branches, from the UNISON regional committee, and the Oxford and District TUC.

Cambridge

AROUND 50 UNISON union members attended union meetings at the Addenbrooke's Hospital trust in Cambridge last week.

The meetings were the start of a campaign against the government's plans to give only a small minority of nurses in the south east of England the new living allowance.

A protest has been organised for 25 May, the next pay day.

■ **A new issue of the rank and file paper Health Worker is out now, price 20p. For more information or to order copies phone 07970 788 873 or e-mail MarkNew3@aol.com**

Lecturers



NORWICH LECTURERS on the march

LECTURERS IN the NATFHE union at Norwich City College took their first day of strike action on Tuesday 1 May.

They were striking against restructuring plans which will mean the loss of 50 jobs, cuts in courses, and the creation of low paid teaching posts.

There was a great turnout on the picket line, with all five entrances to the college covered. Around 170 members, plus students and local trade unionists,

were there.

This action was followed up on Saturday with a magnificent march through Norwich of 300 people, comprising lecturers, students and trade unionists.

Andy Cairns, joint branch secretary of the NATFHE union, says, "It is looking increasingly likely that further days of strike action will be necessary to stop this attack on education."

A further day of action is planned for this Friday.

● **DAVE MANNINGHAM**

Students

UNIVERSITY MANAGERMENTS at Luton, the University of the West of England (UWE) at Bristol, and Derby are stepping up their draconian measures against students who have not paid their tuition fees.

Luton University expelled 206 students who had not paid their fees last week, and UWE sent letters to 2,400 students threatening them with expulsion.

Derby had already threatened students with being expelled if they didn't pay their fees.

"I just couldn't afford to pay them," said UWE student Chris Hall. "I

borrowed money to pay the fees on a credit card.

"I know dozens of students who can't afford to pay the fees, and some of them won't be able to borrow the money."

Three hundred students protested against the university's letters at UWE last week. Around 20 people demonstrated in Derby.

"If there's 2,400 students in this situation through no fault of their own it seriously suggests that there is something wrong with the funding system in the UK," said Edwin Dyson, the UWE NUS

student union president.

"We back the NUS in its call for grants, not fees."

■ **AROUND 30 students** held a party outside the home of the University of Durham's vice-chancellor, Sir Kenneth Calman, on Thursday of last week.

They were protesting about the increase in hall rents.

"About 20 of us slept out all night," says student Paul Leake. "We wanted to emphasise that our homes are at risk while he gets this huge house completely free."

NO NAZIS IN BERMONDSEY
Saturday 12 May
Assemble 10.30am, South Bermondsey rail station, Ilderton Road, London SE16

Socialist Worker

THE MADMAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE LAUNCHES CRAZY NEW NUKE SCHEME

Blair puts us in the firing line

Socialist policy to bring peace

THE SOCIALIST Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party are totally opposed to Bush and Blair's missile madness, and to all nuclear weapons.

All the major parties are committed to the Trident nuclear missile system that costs over £1.7 billion a year.

The Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party say:

- Scrap Trident—for immediate nuclear disarmament.
- Get out of NATO—remove all US bases in Britain.

TONY BLAIR backs US president George W Bush's plan for a "Son of Star Wars" missile system. But he won't tell you himself.

Blair's official spokesman, Alastair Campbell, let the truth slip last week when he said the plan was "a good idea".

This "good idea" will stampede the globe towards the possibility of extinction, cost up to \$100 billion and unleash an arms race.

Former Tory prime minister Baroness Thatcher urged the government to stop "shilly-shallying" on the issue just a few hours before Campbell spoke.

Blair had spoken on the phone to Bush the day before. The US president then set out his ferocious determination to get the new system up and running.

The madman in the White House now wants:

●Space-based lasers. This is former president Ronald Reagan's original dream of weapons in space.

It would mean 20 to 30 orbiting lasers powered by nuclear reactors.

Backed up with new types of interceptor missiles based in Alaska and North Dakota, this system is designed to knock out other countries' satellites and hit targets on earth.

●"Theatre" missile systems on ships, on land and in the air. These could be deployed, for example, in areas surrounding China, further fuelling conflict.

They would also be used to back US forces in any part of the world.

So if US troops go in to enforce the oil companies' interests in the Gulf or to bully an African debt defaulter there will be more deadly missiles to support them.

This package, with the potential to trigger total global destruction, is what New Labour is supporting.

Upgraded "early warning" radar systems are central to the plan. The US says the most important centres will be in their own country, in Greenland...and in Britain.

Because of the curvature of the Earth, the US bases at Fylingdales and Menwith Hill in Yorkshire are uniquely placed to "spot" missiles from China and Russia. Therefore Blair's decision is very important to Bush.

Foreign secretary Robin Cook was once a member of CND.

Last week in the Commons he declared that Britain would not object if the US wanted to update Fylingdales.

We need a storm of protest against a Labour government that is smoothing the path to global conflagration.

GEORGE BUSH: toxic Texan

Labour splits deepen

THE TORIES and Blair say the system will defend Britain from attack. It will do nothing of the sort.

Britain will be acting as an aircraft carrier for the US. It will not be inside the US "missile shield", but it will be an obvious target because of its strategic bases.

Blair's willingness to become "radar station number one" and do whatever Bush wants is causing deep splits inside the Labour Party.

Last week Lord Healey and Peter Kilfoyle attacked Bush's plan. These are members of the party's old right wing.

What the plan means

IF BUSH succeeds, the US will be able to launch a nuclear strike against any other country and be sure there is no retaliation.

The people round Bush are deadly serious about this.

His secretary of defence is Donald Rumsfeld.

He served under presidents Nixon and Reagan.

This Dr Strangelove character says his plan is for the US "to fight and win a nuclear war".

General Joseph Ashy, commander in chief of the US space command, says, "Some people don't want to

hear this but—absolutely—we're going to fight in space."

Nobody is really sure if the missile system will work. But that is only one aspect of its threat.

Build

If the research and deployment go ahead, no other country can be sure that the US programme is a failure.

So China, Russia and other states would desperately try to build up their own nuclear arsenals in order to compete with the US.

The US would tell its

allies to jack up their arms spending.

Most of the world's population would be squeezed to meet the armaments plans of their rulers.

BLOCKADE ALDERMASTON

Monday 14 May, 7am, Reading

NO TO STAR WARS

Vigil, Tuesday 22 May, 2-6pm, Parliament Square, London

TRASH TRIDENT, LOVE THE PLANET

Carnival, Saturday 2 June, 12 noon, George Square, Glasgow

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